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To the Harvard College Library, Cambridge
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from the Committee of the Birmingham Free
Libraries per J. L. Mullin

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HISTORY
OF
THE BIRMINGHAM FREE LIBRARIES, ETC.

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HISTORY
OF
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BIRMINGHAM FREE LIBRARIES,
THE
SHAKSPERE MEMORIAL LIBRARY,
AND
THE ART GALLERY.

BY
JOHN ALFRED LANGFORD, LL.D.,
Author of "A Century of Birmingham Life," &c. &c.

REPRINTED, BY PERMISSION, FROM THE "BIRMINGHAM MORNING NEWS."

© BIRMINGHAM:
PRINTED BY HALL & ENGLISH, No. 71, HIGH STREET.
1871.

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1878. Mar. 11.

Wm. L. G.

The Committee of the Free Libraries

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CORRECTIONS.

Page 29, line 6 from bottom, *for* where, *read* were.

„	41,	„	23	„	„	„	Blackston's, <i>read</i> Blackstone's.
„	„	„	14	„	„	„	Burn's „ Burns.
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THE BIRMINGHAM FREE LIBRARIES.

“ Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are ; nay they do preserve, as in a violl, the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragon’s teeth ; and, being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand unlesse warinesse be us’d, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Booke ; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God’s Image ; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth ; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master-spirit, imbalm’d and treasur’d up on purpose to a life beyond life.” These are the noble and eloquent words used by John Milton when pleading to the Parliament of the Commonwealth on behalf of a free and unlicensed press. Such words rise naturally to the mind in thinking of large public libraries, and of the provisions which a few wise towns have made to supply the people with the free use of well-selected collections of the “ pretious life-blood ” of all the master spirits who have from the earliest to the latest times “ imbalm’d and treasur’d up,” their thoughts to “ a life beyond life.” The Birmingham Free Libraries have only been in existence a few years, and the historian of Free Town Libraries has already pronounced the Reference Library to be “ really a library ; and not merely a heap of

books.”* Before, however, this great good was accomplished, those who advocated the introduction of the Act into the town had to suffer a defeat, and several years of agitation were necessary before the public mind was ripe for its adoption.

In 1845 the Museums Act was passed, by which public free museums were authorised to be established by town councils in cities and boroughs containing not less than 10,000 inhabitants. A Free Libraries Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1849, and the information which it elicited led to the passing of Mr. Ewart's Acts of 1850 and 1855. “By the Museums and Libraries Act of 1850 the Act of 1845 was repealed, and town councils were authorised to establish ‘public libraries and museums’ in towns, in case two-thirds of the number on a poll of the burgesses should be favourable thereto. This Act restricted the expenditure to an amount equal to *one half-penny in the pound* on the annual value of the property in the borough, which amount was authorised to be raised by a library rate, or included in the borough rate; but such rate was only applicable to the *maintaining* of a museum and library *when formed*, and did *not allow* any portion of it to be expended in the *purchase of books for the library or specimens for the museum.*”†

It was under the provisions of this Act that the first attempt to found a library in Birmingham was made, and to Mr. Councillor Boyce belongs the credit of having been the first to bring the subject before the public. On February 6, 1852, he introduced it to the Town Council, and moved that at the next meeting the Council should take it

* Free Town Libraries—their Formation, Management, and History; in Britain, France, Germany, and America. By Edward Edwards.—1869.

† Paper on Free Public Libraries and Museums, &c., read by Mr. David Chadwick at the meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, held in Birmingham in 1857. This was the first Congress held by the Association.

into consideration, and then decide as to the advisability of introducing the Act into the borough. On March the 19th, the Town Council, by resolution, requested the Mayor (Mr. Henry Hawkes) to take the necessary steps to ascertain from the burgesses whether or not the Public Libraries Act should be brought into operation in this borough. The Mayor, acting upon this resolution, appointed April 7, as the day for taking the opinion of the burgesses on the question. The extreme devotees of voluntaryism (headed by the Rev. Brewin Grant), and the friends of ignorance coalesced on this occasion, for the purpose of defeating the proposal. The advocates of the Act were not inactive. On the 31st of March, a meeting of friends favourable to the object was held at the Public Office, Mr. T. Weston presiding. A sub-committee, consisting of J. R. Boyce, E. C. Osborne, George Dawson, M.A., Samuel Timmins, W. Harris, and J. A. Langford, was elected to canvass the town, and to secure the necessary majority. All their efforts were in vain. Once more ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry prevailed, and, aided by this the earliest attempt of law to defeat the will of the majority, gained a short and discreditable victory. The result of the polling on April 7, was, for the adoption of the Act, 534; against it, only 363. The Act of 1850 required a majority consisting of two-thirds of the votes, and, therefore, the proposal was lost. The people were indebted to Mr. R. Spooner for the clause requiring a majority of two-thirds; and principally to the Rev. Brewin Grant for the rejection of the Act. "We have no inclination," wrote the editor of the *Birmingham Journal* at the time, "to discuss the causes that have contributed to this result, and much less to expose the means adopted by a portion of the Opposition. Printed statements, in which it would be difficult to say whether the falsehood or the ignorance and impertinence of the writer prevailed, were

freely distributed; and even at the polling place persons were detected personating voters."

By another beautiful provision of the Act two years must now elapse before the question could again be brought before the burgesses. Seven years, we regret to say, had to pass away before the town adopted the Act. In 1855, Mr. Ewart, M.P., succeeded in greatly improving the Act of 1850, and through his indefatigable efforts and persistent zeal, the existing Act was obtained. It greatly extended the powers conferred by that of 1850; and increased the library rate to one penny in the pound on the annual value of property; authorised the use of any part of the rate for the purchase of books and specimens; and also conferred powers to borrow money to purchase suitable buildings, the interest being payable out of the library rate.

The beginning of a free library was made in 1855, by the presentation to the town of 200 volumes by the Commissioners of Patents, of indexes, specifications, and other works, on the condition that they were deposited in a free public library. This subject was brought before the Town Council on June 5, and a letter was read from Mr. W. Mathews, jun., Hon. Secretary of the Midland Institute, offering to provide a proper place of deposit, and a librarian. It was resolved, "That the Institute be requested to accept the offer made by the Commissioners of Patents, and that the Council inform them that the books will be placed in the rooms of the Midland Institute, open to the public without charge; that when a free library is established, the works to be transferred to such library, and that the Council be responsible for the books."

We now reach the period when public opinion had been educated sufficiently, and the Act was adopted. The subject was again brought before the Town Council on August 16, 1859, by Mr. E. C. Osborne, who moved:—

"That this Council doth hereby request the Mayor (Mr. Thos. Lloyd) to convene a public meeting of the burgesses, to determine whether they will adopt for this borough an Act passed in the 18th and 19th years of the reign of her present Majesty, intituled 'An Act for further promoting the Establishment of Free Public Libraries and Museums in Municipal Towns,' and for extending it to Towns governed under Local Municipal Acts, and to Parishes,' and to do all other acts required by the said Statute, for convening such public meeting, and obtaining the opinions and determination of the burgesses thereon." Mr. James Taylor, jun., moved, as an amendment, which was adopted, "That a committee, consisting of Aldermen Manton and Lloyd, Councillors Maher, Osborne, Biddle, Wright, Taylor, and Holland, be appointed to consider the subject, and report to a meeting of the Council previous to a meeting of the burgesses."

On the 3rd of January, 1860, this committee presented its report, which was as follows :—

The committee appointed by the Council on the 16th day of August last to draw up a report for presentation to a public meeting of the burgesses, to be convened by the Mayor, to determine whether they will adopt for this borough the Act of the 18th and 19th Victoria, "For further promoting the establishment of Free Public Libraries and Museums in municipal towns," present the following report :—

Upwards of seven years have elapsed since an attempt was made to introduce the Free Libraries and Museums Act into this borough. As is well known, that effort proved unsuccessful; owing, it is believed to the public being but imperfectly acquainted with the nature and provisions of the Act, and from the existence of prejudices and doubts incident to all new and untried projects. It is thought the present is a favourable time to make another appeal to the burgesses. During the period above named, several large towns have adopted the Act, and we have, therefore, the means of estimating its value by their experience, and of thus ascertaining if it is productive of those beneficial results which its friends anticipated. The Act under which it is now proposed to establish a Free Library and Museum is entitled, "An Act for further promoting the Establishment of Free Public Libraries and Museums in Municipal Towns, and for extending it to towns governed under Local Improvement Acts, and to parishes." It received the royal assent on the 30th of July, 1855. It repeals the preceding Libraries Act of 1850, but enacts that all libraries founded under that Act shall be maintained under the provisions of the present Act, The Act

applies to all boroughs in England, the population of which at the latest census shall exceed 5,000 persons, and to districts and parishes. In order to the adoption of the Act in any such borough, a public meeting of the burgesses must be duly convened, after at least ten days' notice by the Mayor; and the proposition for its adoption must be voted for by at least two-thirds of the burgesses present. After such vote, if it be in the affirmative, the Act comes into immediate operation. If the decision of the meeting be adverse, one year must elapse before the question can be renewed. The Act having been adopted, the Town Council may defray the expenses of carrying it into execution out of the borough fund; or a separate rate may be levied, to be called the library rate; provided that in either case such separate rate shall not exceed one penny in the pound on the rateable value of the property assessed. The library accounts must be separately kept, and be publicly accessible. The general management and control of libraries and museums thus established, and all the real and personal property therein, are vested in the Council. The Council may delegate their powers to a committee, the members whereof may or may not be members of such Council, "who may from time to time purchase books, newspapers, maps, specimens of art and science, fuel, lighting, and other similar matters," and "may appoint salaried officers and servants, and dismiss the same, and make rules and regulations for the safety and use of the libraries and museums, and for the admission of the public," which must be "free of all charge." Powers are also given to rent and purchase lands (subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Treasury), to erect new buildings, or to purchase, adapt, and fit up old buildings for the reception of books or other collections, and to borrow money on mortgage in order thereto.

From the foregoing outline, it is obvious that the Act is founded on the broadest and most catholic principles. The advantages it offers are freely, and without favour extended to all classes, without exception. And as the rate levied for the purposes of the Act is paid by the community generally, all have an equal right to these advantages; so that while these institutions are placed beyond the need of charity or bounty, those who avail themselves of the benefits they afford, do so without being subject to those depressing influences that arise from a sense of dependence or sufferance.

About twenty towns have adopted the Act, and amongst the number those of Manchester and Liverpool. A brief reference to the working of the Act in these towns, as more nearly resembling our own than some others, may be useful. The town that first adopted the Act of 1850 was Manchester, in the year 1852. As by this Act it was prohibited to expend any portion of the library rate (which was limited to a halfpenny in the pound) in the purchase of books or works of art or science, thus leaving the formation and support of the library and museum to chance gifts, it became necessary to raise a fund for the purpose by an appeal to the generosity of the public. Subscriptions for this reason were raised in these towns. The present Act, however, renders it unnecessary to seek this auxiliary aid. In Manchester the sum of £12,823 was thus raised, £7,013 of which was expended in the purchase of a suitable building and site. The number of volumes purchased amounted to 18,028, at a cost of £4,156. About 3,200 volumes of books

were presented by various donors; the most valuable, amounting to 500, were from public boards and departments, and from learned societies. Of the remainder, four-fifths were of very small value. The experience of this library, in that respect, as of many others, tends to confirm the opinion, that casual donations is a totally untrustworthy source for the formation of public libraries under any circumstances. The 21,000 volumes with which the library opened have increased during the seven years of its existence to 51,240; 27,012 of which are contained in the reference library, and 19,739 are apportioned to the three lending departments, situated in various parts of the town. The Reference Library contains 33,224 Specifications of Patents, contributed by Her Majesty's Commissioners. These 51,240 volumes are classified as follows; from which it appears that a large proportion are connected with the higher branches of knowledge and literature :—

CLASS.

Theology and Philosophy	2,234
History	15,876
Politics and Commerce	6,087
Science and Art	3,699
Literature and Polygraphy	16,540
Specifications of Patents	2,306
Miscellaneous	3,655
Educational Books, Maps, Charts, &c.	843
Total	51,240

The aggregate issues of books during the first year were 138,312, or an average of 455 daily. The aggregate issues during the past year were 305,512, or a daily average of 1,042. Of the issues during the past year 115,206 were from the Reference department, and 190,306 from the Lending department. Each volume, therefore, in the Reference department has been issued five times during the year, while in the Lending department it has amounted to seven times for the same period. The daily average number attending the News Rooms during the past year was 1,929. The total number of books which has been issued since the formation of the Library is, in the Reference department 602,659; in the Lending department, 1,397,672; making a total for the seven years of 2,000,329 volumes. The class of works issued during the past year in the Reference department is as follows :—

I.—Theology	3,317
II.—Philosophy	868
III.—History	16,272
IV.—Politics	44,675
V.—Science and Art	9,035
VI.—Literature and Polygraphy	41,041

The public utility of free access to the Specifications of Patents may be judged from the fact that during the year as many as 36,927 references have been made to them. The class of books principally in demand in the Lending Libraries may be estimated when it is stated, that in the chief Lending

Library alone such books as the following have been issued from 20 to 50 times during the year :—

Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.	Macauley's History of England.
Life of Wellington.	Hoblyn and Lardner on the Steam
Life of Cromwell.	Engine.
Field's Grammar of Colouring.	Thompson's Chemistry.
Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.	Household Words.
Chambers's Works.	Dickens's Works.
Shakspeare.	Sir Walter Scott's Works.
Reid on the Human Mind.	

And others of an equally high standard.

The number of borrowers to whom cards have been issued since the formation of the branch Libraries is 23,775. During the past year an Educational Department has been added to the library, from which the most important results are anticipated. Books, maps, diagrams, models, &c., have been freely contributed by many of the principal publishers in the kingdom.

As regards the Liverpool Free Library, the results are equally gratifying. This Library was established in the year 1854, the number of volumes consisting of 4,437, which have increased to 53,018. The aggregate issues in 1854 were 35,978; for the past year they amounted to 639,043, being an actual circulation of 12,290 volumes per week, or an increase in the issues of 52,177 volumes during the year, or upwards of 1,000 per week. 202,534 persons have availed themselves of the Reference Library during the year, being an increase of 7,081 over the preceding year. The average number of books issued daily in this department for the same period was 710. After giving a classified list of the books read during the last twelve months, the report of the Liverpool Library observes, "That whilst the issues on the whole have considerably increased, the proportion of works of imagination has considerably diminished. The issues in the lending department exceeded those of the previous year by 45,096 volumes, the total number issued being 436,509. In the winter months the demand for books is enormous, as many as 10,000 having been lent in one week. The number of cards issued to borrowers since the establishment of the library is 17,514; there are at the present time 8,277 readers." The report goes on to remark, that of this number it is believed about 3,000 really read with a desire to furnish their minds with useful knowledge, while the remaining number appear to read simply for amusement and recreation. Large as this proportion appears, it will bear comparison with any library in the kingdom where a mixed description of literature is freely circulated. The total number of volumes issued during the six years the library has been established is 1,703,003, or a daily average of about 2,000.

It is of importance to observe that the experience of Manchester and Liverpool proves that, whilst the libraries are extensively used by professional men, merchants, students, clerks, and shopkeepers, by far the larger proportion of readers, being about three-fifths, consists of artisans, and that a considerable portion of the whole number are young persons and females. The occupations, for instance, of 7,755 persons, the number of readers in the Lending Library for the year 1858, were as follows :—

Apprentices, office lads, and school boys	1,832
Mechanics, labourers, warehousemen, and police officers	2,826
Clerks and shopmen	1,390
Commission agents and retail tradesmen	186
Students and others engaged in professions	60
Business not ascertained, principally females	1,461
	7,755

Of this number there were 6,383 males, and 1,372 females, 3,395 being under twenty-one years of age. The following extract from the Manchester report also fully bears out these facts:—"From the first the Library of Reference has been extensively used by persons of all classes in society. Many clergymen and ministers of various denominations frequently visit it, for purposes of research. Commercial men of all grades occasionally come thither, in search of information on some pending question of politics or trade, on points connected with patents of inventions, and other like subjects. Young men of good education and acquirements come habitually, some to read history, some to read books on commerce, others to study theology or philosophy. There are readers of this class who come almost daily, both morning and evening for many months. But the majority of evening readers—and it is in the evening that the library is most largely frequented—have always belonged to what are popularly termed 'the working classes.' Many, of course, read merely for amusement; but not a few, consecutively, and with an obvious purpose of self-improvement."

After the examples given, it is perhaps unnecessary to give further illustrations of the working of these institutions. It may, however, be observed, that from every town from which reports have been obtained—Salford, Sheffield, Birkenhead, and Oxford being among the number—similar encouraging results are recorded, and, in every instance, the establishment of a free library has been hailed by the inhabitants as an important agent towards the mental and moral improvement of all classes of society.

In this report the committee have confined themselves to an inquiry into the working of free public libraries in other large towns; but they have not thought it necessary to offer any suggestions as to the expenditure it would be advisable to make in the erection or purchase of suitable buildings. These are considerations which of course will engage the attention of the Council, in the event of its being empowered to establish such libraries. The penny library rate would produce £3,436 on the present assessment of the borough; a small portion of this sum would be required to pay the annual interest and sinking fund on amount borrowed for the buildings, if it should be decided upon to build. The remainder would be the fund which would annually be expended in the purchase of books and works of art and science, and in the maintenance of the library generally. And as this may be regarded as a cumulative fund, ample means exist for the development of the library in the course of time, to a degree commensurate with the wants of the population.

Before closing their report, your committee would impress upon every member of the Council the importance of exerting himself, individually, in

order to secure the success of this effort. The question will be decided at a public meeting of burgesses of the borough; and, if each member of the Council will but unite with those of their fellow-citizens who desire to assist in promoting the establishment of a free library and museum in this great and important town, there can be no doubt but that their efforts will be crowned with a triumphant issue.

Finally, your committee recommend the Council to reappoint this committee, so that they may be enabled to organise and make all necessary arrangements for the meeting of burgesses, when it shall have been convened by the Mayor.

It was resolved—That that the report of the Free Public Libraries Committee be adopted as the report of this Council to the meeting of burgesses to be convened by the Mayor, in pursuance of the provisions of the Act, and that the Free Libraries Committee be re-appointed, for the purpose of organising and making all necessary arrangements for such meeting accordingly.

The meeting of the burgesses was held in the Town Hall, on February 21, 1860, Mr. Thomas Lloyd, the Mayor, in the chair. Mr. E. C. Osborne moved the resolution for the adoption of the Act, which was seconded by the Rev. Dr. Miller, and supported by Mr. George Dawson. It found an opponent in Mr. Councillor Gameson, but was carried by an overwhelming majority. In announcing the result, Mr. Lloyd said he felt it a great honour that the Act had been adopted during his year of office.

The passing of the resolution by the burgesses was reported to the Council at its meeting on March 6, and the following resolution was adopted:—"That a committee be now appointed, to be called 'The Free Public Libraries and Museums Committee,' and that all necessary powers be conferred by this Council on such committee to enable them to bring into operation in this borough an Act passed in the 18th and 19th years of the reign of Her present Majesty, intituled 'An Act for further promoting the establishment of free public libraries and museums in municipal towns, and for extending it to towns governed under Local Improvement Acts and to Parishes,' reporting from time to time to the Council for approval; and that such committee do consist of sixteen members, eight to be elected from the Council and eight out of the Council."

The committee was elected at this and the following meeting held on March 13, and consisted of—

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

The Mayor,
Alderman T. R. T. Hodgson,
„ J. H. Cutler,
„ J. Baldwin,
Councillor A. Ryland,
„ E. C. Osborne,
„ M. Maher,
„ H. Holland,

NON-MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

Rev. E. H. Gifford, M.A.,
„ C. Badham, D.D.,
Dr. T. P. Heslop,
Mr. John Jeffray,
„ Peter Hollins,
„ Samuel Timmins,
„ J. T. Bunce,
„ W. Middlemore.

The new committee presented its first report to the Council on the 15th of May, 1860. It was as follows :—

The Free Public Libraries and Museums Committee have to report that they instructed the Finance Committee to make provision for defraying the cost of bringing into operation the Free Libraries and Museums Act, by raising a sum amounting to one penny in the pound on the present assessment of the rateable property of the borough, for the service of the present municipal year.

Your committee have carefully considered the best mode of carrying into effect the provisions of the Act, and they have unanimously agreed to the following recommendations :—

Your committee is of opinion that the scheme as a whole should comprise a central reference library with reading and news rooms, a museum and gallery of art, and four district lending libraries with news rooms attached.

The value of a reference library, where useful and expensive books may be consulted, and where the publications of the Commissioners of Patents, gratuitously furnished to the borough, may be deposited, requires no remark; but your committee desire to bring before the Council the advantages that would result to the inhabitants generally from the incorporation therewith of a museum and gallery of art. Until lately, the privilege of possessing a collection of works of art to which the public have free access, was confined to the metropolis. Edinburgh, however, has now a public gallery, and there is good ground for believing that so soon as the principal provincial towns shall possess proper places for their custody, they will share in some of those gifts which have been and are annually being made to the nation, and for which adequate accommodation cannot be found in the metropolis. The Council is probably aware that one of the recommendations, almost amounting to a condition, which accompanied the splendid gift by Mr. Sheepshanks of his Gallery of Modern Paintings, was that they should circulate in the provinces. The committee have reason to believe that, if a proper Gallery were erected, there would be no difficulty in obtaining the sanction of the Government to the Exhibition of this matchless collection in Birmingham. The Royal Society, in a report issued about two years ago, has also recommended that the provinces should have the advantages of the treasures of art and manufacture now exclusively confined to the metropolis.

Your committee need scarcely remind the Council that, independently of the intellectual pleasure derivable from such a gallery, the pursuits of a vast number of the manufacturers and artisans of this town require a knowledge of beauty of form and colour which the best examples of art are calculated to impart, and this fact will no doubt greatly influence the Government in any application made to them for aid, either permanent or temporary, in the formation of a local gallery of art. The committee have also reason to believe that donations of pictures and statuary will be made by private individuals.

Your committee propose that there should be four distinct lending libraries, so situated as to render them easy of access to the inhabitants of the more densely populated localities. With this view they recommend that they should be situated as nearly as possible as follows :—

- That for the Northern District, near St. George's Church.
- „ Southern District, in the vicinity of Bradford Street.
- „ Eastern District, near Gosta Green.
- „ Central and Western, near the Town Hall.

Your committee recommend that the Central and Western Lending Library should form part of the proposed central building, but that until such building is erected rooms should be rented for that purpose.

The following is an estimate of the first cost of establishing each of the four Lending Libraries, which they propose should in the first instance be established in premises rented for the purpose, with the expense of maintenance for one year, and also the annual sum required for their future maintenance.

	£	s.	d.
3,000 Volumes	450	0	0
Rent and Taxes	50	0	0
Gas, Water, and Insurance	15	0	0
Coal	10	0	0
Librarian's Salary	75	0	0
Assistant (a Boy)	13	0	0
Cleaning and Sundries	10	0	0
Printing, Stationery, and Advertising	20	0	0
Newspapers and Periodicals	40	0	0
Preparing Catalogues	5	0	0
Bookshelves and Furniture	125	0	0
	£813	0	0

The establishment and maintenance for the first year of the four lending libraries would, therefore, cost the sum of £3,252.

The annual cost of each after the first year would be	240	0	0
Add new books	100	0	0
„ for binding	80	0	0
	£370	0	0

Annual cost of maintaining the four libraries after the first year, £1,480.
From this sum, however, would have to be deducted £90, rent and cost of

newspapers and periodicals, which will not continue to be paid when the Western and Central Library is transferred to the new building, leaving the net annual expenditure on the four libraries £1,390.

Your Committee have received a communication from the Baths and Parks Committee, suggesting that suitable accommodation for some of the proposed District Lending Libraries may be provided in connection with the Public Baths, and your Committee recommend that they be authorised to confer with the Baths and Parks Committee in order to ascertain whether arrangements can be made for obtaining permanent accommodation for the Libraries in connection with any of their establishments; and further, that your Committee be empowered to open four Lending Libraries forthwith in the localities before indicated, and to rent premises suitable for that purpose until such time as permanent buildings shall have been provided.

The following resolution was passed :—

That the report of the Free Public Libraries and Museums Committee be approved and that the Committee be and they are hereby authorised and instructed to carry into effect the recommendations contained in their report.

On July 31st the following report was presented to the Council :—

The Free Libraries and Museums Committee report that in conformity with the resolution of the Council, authorising them to open forthwith four lending libraries, and to rent premises for that purpose, they caused advertisements to be published in the local newspapers for suitable premises in the various localities appointed by the Council, and received many replies thereto, but upon examination of the several premises offered, your Committee found that none of them were suitable except those belonging to Mr. Cartland, in Constitution Hill. These they consider to be admirably adapted for the purpose of a lending library for the northern district of the borough, being advantageously situated, and commodious with respect to the dimensions and arrangement of the rooms. The premises referred to are situate on the west side of Constitution Hill, and have been used as part of the floor cloth manufactory recently occupied by Messrs. Kempson, and will afford accommodation on the ground floor for a library 60 feet long by 19 feet wide, and 14 feet high, and on the upper floor for a reading room 27 feet by 24 feet, and 10 high, together with a residence for the librarian. Certain alterations which your Committee will require may be effected at a cost not exceeding £300. This property, which is of a most substantial construction, has been offered upon a lease for twenty-one years, at an annual rent of £45, subject to the Council keeping the premises in proper repair and condition.

Your Committee, in accordance with the directions of the Council, placed themselves in communication with the Baths and Parks Committee, and have ascertained that in connection with the proposed Baths in Northwood Street, two rooms might be erected, each 35 feet by 18 feet, the cost of which would be about £600. The accommodation which would be afforded by these rooms would be greatly inferior to that which would be obtained in

Mr. Cartland's premises, and it cannot be extended, and in the opinion of the Committee the situation of Constitution Hill is more central and convenient than Northwood Street; and as it is obvious that it is of importance the library first opened should be in a principal thoroughfare of the district; they, therefore, recommend the Council to authorise them to take a lease of Mr. Cartland's premises at an annual rent of £45, and to expend a sum not exceeding £300 in adapting the premises for the library.

The report was approved, and the committee was authorised and instructed (with the approval of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury) to accept the offer of Mr. Cartland of the premises in Constitution Hill, upon the terms contained in the said report, and adapt the same for the purposes of a Free Lending Library for the northern district of the borough.

The committee immediately began to carry out the instructions of the council, and on the 4th of September reported that—

In their opinion the piece of vacant ground belonging to the Midland Institute, and adjoining the Institute buildings, is the most eligible site that can be found whereon to erect the Central Reference Library, Museum, and Gallery of Art. Your committee have had several interviews with a deputation from the council of the Institute on the subject, and ascertained that about 10,000 square feet of land are available for the purposes of the library and other buildings contemplated by your committee, and that the council of the Institute have power under their Act of Incorporation to grant such land, and are willing to transfer it to the Corporation for such purpose upon the following conditions :—

1st. That the Corporation undertake to erect the building in accordance with the plan of Mr. E. M. Barry, with such internal variations as may be necessary.

2nd. That the Corporation repay the Institute the cost of certain leasehold interests on that part of the property unoccupied by the Institute, and included in the site proposed to be granted to the Corporation (being about £500) the Corporation also taking upon itself the payment of the annuity of £40 per annum for the remainder of the lease.

3rd. That all questions of right of way and access to the upper stories of the building be subject to future arrangement between the Council of the Institute and your Committee.

It is scarcely necessary for your committee to point out the importance of securing this valuable and in every respect eligible site for the erection of the Central Library. It would perhaps be impossible to obtain a piece of land better adapted to the purpose required, in so convenient and central a locality, and, even presuming that such could be obtained, its great value would be a serious impediment to its acquisition by the Council. While,

therefore, the Midland Institute site affords all the accommodation needful, with the advantage of an excellent situation, the Free Library will have the benefit of possessing land rent free, and thus have the means of devoting a larger sum annually to its operations than would otherwise be the case.

Your committee are unable to state the exact amount required to erect the proposed building, but judging from the information received from the Institute Council they are of opinion it will not exceed the sum of £9,000.

Your committee therefore recommend the Council to authorise them to accept a transfer of the land from the Council of the Midland Institute upon the foregoing conditions, and to obtain plans for the erection of the requisite buildings in accordance with Mr. Barry's design, subject to such modifications in the internal arrangements thereof as may be necessary, together with an estimate of the cost of carrying such plans into effect, and to submit the same, together with a report thereon, to the Council for approval."

The Council resolved to take the report into consideration at the next monthly meeting, and in the meantime the committee were instructed to prepare plans showing the manner in which the intended building was proposed to be adapted for the purpose of the library, and lay the same before the Council, with an estimate of the cost thereof.

On the 12th of February, 1861, the committee reported as follows :—

Your committee have accepted Mr. Cartland's offer of a lease of the building adjoining his manufactory in Constitution Hill, upon the terms contained in their report of the 31st July last, and are now in possession of the premises, which they have caused to be adapted and fitted up for the purposes of a lending library. The alterations and fitting up of the premises necessarily occupied a considerable time, but with the exception of the fixing of the book-shelves and other fittings (which is rapidly progressing) they are now completed.

The committee having received from the committee for the amalgamation of the old and new libraries, an offer of the books of the new library in Temple Row West upon advantageous terms, entered into negotiation with the proprietors, and having ascertained that the library consisted of about 6,500 volumes, comprising the works of most of the standard writers in all departments of English literature (including complete series of the principal reviews and magazines) all in good order and condition, and well adapted for general circulation, your committee effected the purchase of the same at the sum of £300.

The purchase of the books rendered it incumbent upon your committee to proceed to the appointment of a librarian, which they did in the customary manner by advertising for candidates. On examination of the testimonials of the 120 persons who applied for the office, 15 only appeared to have had any experience of the duties required of them, and among those were two

who then held situations in institutions of a similar character; one as manager of the Free Lending Library, Campfield, Manchester, the other as sub-librarian at the Free Library at Salford; and after a personal interview with each of these candidates, the choice of your committee fell upon Mr. Edward Lings, of the Manchester Free Library, as possessing the most knowledge and experience, and being in their opinion the best qualified for the office, and he was thereupon appointed librarian accordingly at the salary fixed by the Council, namely, £75 per annum, together with residence, fire, and light. Since Mr. Lings entered upon his duties on the 1st December last, he has been actively engaged in classifying, arranging, labelling and making a catalogue of the books purchased from the New Library, and from the progress hitherto made, your committee have reason to anticipate that the library will be open for public use in the ensuing month.

With reference to the proposition for the erection of the Reference Library on the land adjoining the Midland Institute, your Committee report that they are in communication with Mr. Barry, Architect, upon the subject, and will shortly be prepared to lay before the Council plans of the intended buildings for approval.

The correspondence between the late and present Mayors, and the Executor of the Will of the late Mrs. Barber, respecting the bequest to this Borough of four pictures, has been considered by your Committee, who have conferred with the Town Clerk thereon, and have been advised by him that on the 12th of October last (the date of Mrs. Barber's decease) the Council did *not* possess "any Public Gallery or permanent Institution for receiving and exhibiting pictures presented to the town," within the meaning and intent of the condition of Mrs. Barber's bequest. They therefore recommend that no further proceedings be taken by the Council with reference thereto.

The first annual report of the Free Libraries Committee is for the year 1861; it gives the following account of the opening of the first Library, and of its success:—

The Library in Constitution Hill was opened to the public on the 3rd of April, 1861, by Arthur Ryland, Esq., the then mayor of the borough. The members of the Council, together with those of their fellow citizens interested in the cause of education, numbering about three hundred, were hospitably entertained by the Mayor, at Dee's Royal Hotel, after which they proceeded to the Library in Constitution Hill, for the purpose of publicly inaugurating it; addresses were delivered by the Mayor, the Rev. Canon Miller, George Dawson, Esq., and others, and the Library was then formally declared to be open to the public free, subject, of course, to certain rules and regulations which are appended to this report. The arrangements for the issue of books were not completed till the 22nd of April, on which day the first issue took place. Crowds of persons presented themselves for tickets, and so great was the excitement that for several weeks applicants had to wait upwards of an hour before their turn arrived to be attended to, as many as two hundred persons applying at one time. The reading room, however, which forms an important feature in connection with the lending library, was opened on the day of inauguration, and, as will be seen from the report, the public have not failed to avail themselves of its advantages.

The experience of the past year proves most conclusively, that all classes of society fully appreciate the importance of the means of education which free libraries afford ; 108,057 volumes have been issued since the library was opened, a period of 287 days, being an average daily issue of 376 volumes. As many as 813 volumes have been issued in one day. It will be seen by the returns in this report, that the number of issues is steadily increasing ; 5,422 persons have been enrolled as borrowers, and as the library consists of 6,288 volumes, the larger portion of the library is constantly in the hands of the borrowers ; 2,373 volumes have been added to the library during the year, and so great has been the demand for these books, that they have never been on the shelves since they were purchased, excepting for the half-yearly examination. This state of things, doubtless, arises in some measure from the fact, that out of the four lending libraries, authorised by the Council to be established, one only is at present opened ; an examination of the residence of the borrowers, however, proves that by far the greater number live within a moderate distance of the library, so that there is no reason to doubt but that, when the libraries are opened in the three remaining districts, no material diminution in the numbers will take place.

The committee much regret that they have been unable to open either of the other three branch libraries. This has arisen from the difficulty of obtaining suitable sites. By a recent vote of the Council, land has been obtained for a library in the southern district, at the junction of Mill Lane with Deritend, but as this land is purchased under the powers of the recent Improvement Act, some time must elapse before it can be in possession of the Free Libraries Committee ; meanwhile, efforts are being made to obtain a suitable site for the eastern district, and negotiations are now pending, which it is hoped will terminate successfully. When the two branch libraries referred to are established, it will only remain to complete the scheme, sanctioned by the Council, to erect the central library on the land adjoining the Midland Institute. This building will contain, in addition to the lending library and news room for the western district, a gallery of art and the reference library. Unforeseen difficulties have delayed the erection of this important building ; the sum of £10,500, which the Council voted for its erection, was found inadequate to carry out the designs of E. M. Barry, Esq., the architect of the Midland Institute, there being a difference between his estimate and the lowest tender, of nearly £8,000 ; but as this amount was voted on the assurance of Mr. Barry that it would be sufficient for the purpose, it is manifest that no blame can attach to the committee, who were guided by the report of that gentleman. The committee have, however, in accordance with the decision of the Council, advertised for new plans and estimates, and it is hoped that a building, in every respect adapted to the purpose, may be erected without further delay.

One of the most interesting features of the experience of the past year is the uniform good conduct and order manifested by the thousands who frequent the library, not a single instance having occurred where it has been found necessary even to complain. Another fact also worth especial note is, that out of an issue of upwards of 108,000 volumes three only have been lost to the library, and only one instance of dishonesty has occurred—two magazines having been stolen from the table of the news room.

In their report, presented to the Council on the 4th of March, 1862, the committee gave the following account of their labours with regard to the Reference Library :—

The advertisement for tenders for the erection of the Reference Library Buildings, on the land adjoining the Midland Institute, according to Mr. Barry's designs, was responded to by seven builders, but your committee regret to report that all the tenders received were greatly in excess of the amount placed at their disposal by the Council, the lowest being that of Messrs. Branson and Gwyther, at £18,213. Under these circumstances, your committee invited Mr. Barry to attend them in Birmingham, when the plans of the buildings were carefully reconsidered, and various suggestions for reducing the cost were made by the committee, and Mr. Barry was instructed to report thereon, embodying therein his own propositions for the amendment of the plans.

Accordingly, on the 11th of November last, Mr. Barry reported that he had carefully considered the designs for the building, with a view to the reduction of the cost, in which he had had the co-operation of Messrs. Branson and Gwyther, the contractors for the Midland Institute, whose tender for the erection of the library was the lowest in amount, and through whose courtesy he had been able to compare the prices tendered for the library with those charged for the Institute, when he found them the same in almost every instance, and did not think better terms could be obtained, even if the works were again thrown open to competition. Mr. Barry submitted the following list of omissions and alterations, an estimate of the reduction in the cost of the building which would be effected thereby, viz. :

1. Omitting the Gallery of Art	£2,000 0 0
2. Omitting the Cellars proposed to be let, and carrying down only such portion of the basement as will be absolutely wanted	1,000 0 0
3. Omitting the carved figures at the principal entrance and leaving it in its present condition	320 0 0
4. The adoption of the modified design for the Reading and News Rooms	1,050 0 0
(The modified design referred to reduces the height of the library and reading rooms, and alters the form of construction of the roof).	
5. Omitting the closets and washing room at the back of the principal staircase, and providing substitutes under the flights of stairs, also substituting Wingerworth stone for Hopton Wood stone, in the construction of the staircase	280 0 0
6. Making certain changes in the details and construction of the building, which may be effected without detriment to its appearance or stability, simplifying some of the more ornamental portions, omitting others, and substituting a more ordinary construction for the large amount of wrought iron work proposed, would effect an estimated reduction of	1,312 10 0
Total	£5,962 10 0

The above amount deducted from Messrs. Branson and Gwyther's tender of £18,218, reduces it to £12,250. 10s. ; or, if the Gallery of Art is included, to £14,250. 10s. ; beyond which Mr. Barry does not consider it possible to lessen the amount, without sacrificing the convenience of the library and the architectural appearance of the whole building.

Mr. Barry finally expressed his regret at having been instrumental in leading the committee originally to a different conclusion, and stated that his estimate was based on the supposition that the Free Library would cost the same sum per cubic foot as the Institute, but a sufficient allowance had not been made for the extra expense entailed by the necessary peculiarities of the new building, considered with reference to its destined occupation and use.

Your committee then submitted (through their chairman) some further suggestions to Mr. Barry, and requested him again to revise his designs so as to obtain a further reduction in the cost of the buildings, and also to report if, by any re-arrangement of the plans altogether, the requisite accommodation could be afforded for the amount voted by the Council, when, after fully considering the subject, Mr. Barry expressed his opinion that he could make no alteration or re-arrangement which would effect a greater saving in the cost of construction than as before detailed.

Your committee, after bestowing much and anxious consideration on Mr. Barry's suggestions, are of opinion that it is desirable to make an effort to obtain the erection of the buildings, including the Gallery of Art, for the sum voted for that purpose by the Council ; and recommend that they be empowered to obtain, by advertisement or otherwise, as to your committee shall seem fit, plans and estimates for the erection of a building affording all the required accommodation, with an elevation uniform with that of the Institute, at a cost not exceeding the sum already voted. And your committee further recommend that they be authorised to offer premiums for the plans that may be considered most meritorious.

The report was approved, and the committee was authorised to obtain plans, specifications, and estimates of the Free Library Buildings, in accordance with the recommendations contained in such report, and also to offer, if they should think it desirable, premiums of £30 for the best, and £20 and £15 for the second and third best plans that may be received ; and that the committee do submit such plans, specifications, and estimates, together with their recommendations thereon, to this Council for approval.

The Committee reported on the 1st of July, that they had advertised for plans and estimates for the erection of the Free Reference Library and Buildings, on the land adjoining the Midland Institute, and in reply had received plans from

three architects; and, after a careful examination and comparison thereof, were unanimously of opinion that those sent in by Mr. William Martin were the best, as affording the requisite accommodation, with the most convenient and most economical arrangement; but as the cost of carrying out the same would amount, according to the architect's estimate, to the sum of £12,000, being £1,500 in excess of the sum voted by the Council, for the erection of the said buildings, the Committee submitted the plans to the Council for approval, and recommended that they be authorised to obtain tenders from builders for the execution of the works, in accordance with Mr. Martin's designs, and to enter into contracts for the erection and completion thereof. The Committee were authorised to obtain tenders for and execute the work, provided the cost should not exceed £12,000.

On the 12th of August, the Committee reported that instructions had been given to Mr. Martin, architect, to prepare a detailed specification and working drawings for the erection of the Free Reference Library and Buildings, in accordance with his designs, approved by the Council. They had also invited builders to compete for their erection.

On the 25th of November, the Council authorised the Committee to purchase 287 square yards of freehold land at the corner of Legge Street and Aston Road, at the price of £1,000, as the site for a branch library.

The annual report for 1862 shows that the Library in Constitution Hill was a continued success. The total number of books was 8,001, of which 1,713 were added during the year. The total issues were 108,058, or a daily average of 377 volumes. The News Room had also been visited by large numbers of readers, averaging between 9,000 and 10,000 a week.

The next report of the Committee was presented to the Council on the 17th March, 1863. It stated that they had caused public notice to be given that builders desirous of

competing for the erection of the Free Reference Library Buildings, in accordance with Mr. Martin's designs, might inspect particulars and conditions thereof at his offices, and that the Committee were prepared to receive tenders for the execution of the works, whereupon ten tenders were received in reply, varying in amount from £10,238 to £8,600. The marked discrepancy between the amounts of these tenders and those formerly received for the erection of the buildings in accordance with Mr. Barry's designs, induced them to defer the consideration of the tenders, and to propose that the plans, working drawings, and specifications, prepared by Mr. Martin, should be submitted to a consulting architect, with instructions to examine the same, and to advise the Committee as to the sufficiency of the structural works for the purposes for which they were intended. Mr. Martin having concurred in this proposition, they appointed Mr. Philip Hardwicke, jun., an eminent architect of London, to whom Mr. Martin's plans and specifications have been submitted, and from whom a report has been received detailing the result of his examination, in which he makes suggestions for increasing the strength of certain parts of the building, which the Committee had, with the approbation of Mr. Martin, adopted; and they had accepted the tender of Messrs. Branson and Murray, of the 25th day of October last, for the erection of the buildings in accordance with Mr. Martin's designs, for the sum of £8,600, Messrs. Branson and Murray agreeing to execute the additional work required to carry out Mr. Hardwicke's suggestions at the same prices as those upon which their tender was based, with the addition of 10 per cent. thereon, and also to modify the prices in the schedule attached to their said tender, as arranged between them and the architect. The contract was in course of preparation; but, in order to prevent any loss of time, the contractors had already commenced excavating the foundations for the proposed buildings.

The committee also reported that the conveyance of the property at the corner of Legge Street and the Aston Road, agreed to be purchased as a site for a Free Lending Library, was in course of preparation, and only awaited the sanction of the Treasury to be completed. Notices to quit had been served upon the tenants of the premises, with a view to obtain early possession.

In order to meet the expenditure to be incurred in erecting the Central and District Library Buildings, and to complete the purchase of the sites thereof, it was necessary that funds should be provided forthwith; and the committee recommended that the Finance, Rate, and Appeal Committee be instructed to negotiate and obtain a loan of £10,000 under the provisions of the "Free Libraries Act, 1855," for such purposes.

The report was approved, and the Finance Committee was instructed to negotiate a loan of £10,000 to defray the cost of erecting a Free Public Reference Library Buildings for this borough, and the cost of the sites of the District Libraries.

The annual report for the year 1863 called attention to the marked success which had attended the Free Library in Constitution Hill, and the unabated interest of the public therein. Returns had been procured from Free Libraries in 23 towns, by which it appeared that the Birmingham Free Library had, between the date of its opening and the end of the year circulated more books than any other library during the same period.

The returns of the four principal towns are as follows:—

Liverpool—North District	.	.	155,966 vols.
„ South District	.	.	208,451 „
Manchester	.	.	236,320 „
Sheffield	.	.	341,053 „
Birmingham	.	.	357,436 „

The Free Library and Museum in connection with Adderley Park were opened on January 11, 1864, and, in accordance with a resolution of the Town Council, passed on August 18, 1863, the Free Libraries Committee took charge of their management and maintenance. On March 15, 1864, the committee reported that at the time it opened it contained (in addition to a number of books used for reference only) 783 volumes for circulation; to these 500 volumes had been added. Upwards of 400 applications have been received for tickets to borrow books, many of which have been granted. The News Room was supplied with copies of the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Star*, and each of the Birmingham newspapers, together with some of the most popular periodicals. The attendance of readers in the News Room was reported as increasing. The Museum, also open gratuitously to the public, had been visited by many persons since its opening.

In the same report the committee informed the Council that they had directed the sale of the building materials occupying the site of the Free Library at Gosta Green, and that they were taking measures for obtaining designs for the erection of the Library thereon, and also for the erection of a Library in Heath Mill Lane, Deritend.

The next report was presented on August 2nd, 1864, and the committee regretted that much delay had occurred in the erection of the Central Library buildings, attributable in some degree to the late unfortunate strike in the building trade, which deprived the contractors of their stone-masons at a period when their services were most essential to the continued progress of the works. The committee also reported that the surplus land at the corner of Heath Mill Lane having been offered for sale to the owners of the adjoining premises entitled to the right of pre-emption therein, and they having failed to avail themselves of such right, the committee had memorialised the Lords Commis-

sioners of the Treasury for authority to appropriate such surplus land as a site for a Free Library, and the Commissioners having signified their approval of such appropriation, they were taking steps to obtain plans for the erection of the proposed buildings, which would be submitted to the Council for approval.

In 1864 the number of volumes in the Constitution Hill Library had increased to 10,158; the number of issues for the year was 112,557, which showed a decrease of 17,963, as compared with the preceding year. The committee say this "may be attributed, in some degree, to the increase of trade in the borough." The Adderley Park Library now contained 2,825 volumes, with an issue of 18,351 for the past year.

The building of the Central Libraries was now so far advanced, that the committee reported to the Council, April 11, 1865, that the time had arrived when the appointment of a chief librarian should be made; and they recommended that they be authorised to advertise for candidates for the office, at a salary of £200 per annum, and to select and submit the names of three of the best qualified to the Council, for the appointment of one of them. This was approved. The committee also reported that about 10,000 volumes had been purchased for the Central Lending Library, at a cost of £907. 17s., or an average of 1s. 10d. a volume; that during the past quarter 1,000 volumes had been added to the Constitution Hill Library, and about 600 to the Adderley Park Library.

The plans of Messrs. Bateman and Corser for erecting a Branch Library at Heath Mill Lane, at a cost not exceeding £1,000, exclusive of fixtures and furniture, were approved, and the committee authorised to proceed with the building.

The committee advertised for candidates, and on May 30, 1865, they reported to the Council that they "received

32 applications, which, together with their accompanying testimonials, having been carefully considered, your committee had an interview with four of the candidates who appeared to possess the greatest amount of experience in the duties, and, having examined them respectively touching their qualifications for the office, selected Mr. George M'Whea, Mr. J. D. Mullins, and Mr. Edward Lings, whose names they now submit to the Council, with a recommendation that Mr. George M'Whea be appointed to the office." The Council elected Mr. J. D. Mullins chief librarian, and he has fully justified their choice. A more earnest, zealous, and able librarian never yet had the care of books; and his courtesy to all persons who use the library, and the help he has given to students seeking the proper books of reference, are beyond all praise.

The Central Lending Library and the Art Gallery were opened on September 6, 1865, the day appointed for the first meeting of the British Association in this borough, that being considered an appropriate occasion on which to inaugurate so important an educational institution. The committee embraced the opportunity which the presence of many distinguished visitors to the borough afforded to invite their co-operation and assistance at the ceremony. The members of the Council, the magistrates, and many of the principal inhabitants and visitors interested in the cause of popular education, having been hospitably entertained by the Mayor (H. Wiggin, Esq.) at breakfast, at the Royal Hotel, accompanied his Worship to the Libraries in Ratcliff Place, and assisted at the inauguration. A short religious service having been celebrated by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, addresses were delivered by the Mayor, the Right Hon. Lord Stanley, M.P., the Rev. Dr. Miller, and Mr. George Dawson, M.A.; after which, the Library was formally declared by the Mayor to be freely open to the people of Birmingham for ever.

The rooms were used by the British Association during its meetings, so that the issue of books did not begin until the 19th of September. The number of persons who applied for tickets in the next two months was 8,000, 2,500 of whom complied with the conditions upon which tickets were issued, and 1,870 exercised their privilege of borrowing books. The average number of volumes issued per diem being 575, and of persons using the news room 300. The report of the opening of the Library was presented to the Council on November 28, and at its meeting on August 7, 1866, the Council approved the plans of Messrs. Bateman and Corser, for the Gosta Green Library, and authorised the committee to have it erected, at a cost not exceeding £1,000.

The Central Reference Library was open on October 26th, 1866. Mr. George Dawson, M.A., had been invited to deliver the Inaugural Address. At half-past one the Mayor (E. Yates, Esq.), took his seat, supported by the Town Clerk (Mr. T. Standbridge), on his right, and Mr. Dawson on his left, and with the Manuscript Catalogue of the Library on the table before him. The room was crowded by the Members of the Town Council, the Magistrates, the Clergy and Ministers, and the principal inhabitants of the town. At the request of the Mayor, the Venerable Arch-deacon Sandford offered up a prayer, after which the Mayor gave a brief review of the history of the Free Libraries of Birmingham. He said, before calling upon Mr. Dawson for his inaugural address, he desired to congratulate the people of Birmingham on the events of that day, and to remind them of a few of the difficulties which were created in days gone by, only to be overcome by the energy and perseverance of their fellow-townsmen. In thinking of the past, he naturally reverted to the time when it was first proposed in the Town Council that Birmingham should have Free Libraries for the use of the people, and on referring to the

6th February, 1852, he found that Mr. Boyce, then one of the Councillors for Deritend and Bordesley Ward, first introduced the subject of Free Libraries by moving "That the Council at its next meeting do take into consideration the subject of the Public Libraries Act, 13 and 14 Vic., cap. 65, of 1850, with the intention of deciding upon the desirability of the Council requesting the Mayor to take the necessary steps in accordance with the said Act to ascertain whether the provisions thereof shall be adopted in the borough." On the 19th of March, 1852 (the same year), it was resolved:—"That this Council requests the Mayor to take the necessary measures in accordance with the provisions of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, in order to ascertain if it is the wish of the burgesses that the provisions of the said Act shall be carried into effect in this borough;" but on appeal to the burgesses the Act was rejected. Had he been in the Council in those days he had no doubt he should have voted for Mr. Boyce's resolution, and have regretted the burgesses having arrived at the decision they recorded; but at this distance of time he wished to believe the 1850 Act was rejected, not because the people did not require the libraries, but because the Act did not go far enough. It was well known the Public Libraries Act, 1850, authorised the levying of a library rate of one halfpenny in the pound only, out of which to build or rent premises and provide fuel, lighting, fixtures, and furniture, and the salaries of officers, but omitted books. He supposed the promoters of this Act thought, in the towns where it was adopted, a sufficient number of generous and philanthropic persons would be found who would furnish the Libraries with books gratuitously; but Birmingham men felt they ought not to depend altogether on such a source for a supply. The Act of 1855 repealed the former Act, authorised a rate of one penny in the pound, and provided for the

purchase of books, newspapers, maps, and specimens of science and art, in addition to the erection of buildings, &c., as included in the former Act; on the 21st February, 1860, at a public meeting of the burgesses, in the Town Hall, presided over by the then Mayor (Mr. Thomas Lloyd), a majority of upwards of two-thirds of the persons then present voted for its adoption in this borough. On the 13th March, 1860, the Council appointed eight of its own body, and eight gentlemen, burgesses, but not members of the Town Council, to be the first Free Libraries Committee, and those gentlemen proposed, in their report, presented to the Council, May 15th, 1860, that there should be four district Lending Libraries, with news rooms, and one central Reference Library, with museum and gallery of art so situated as to be convenient for the whole of the inhabitants of the town. In pursuance of this object, the Northern District Free Library, Constitution Hill, was opened in April, 1861, during the mayoralty of Mr. Arthur Ryland; the Western and Central Lending Library, Ratcliff Place, in 1865, during the mayoralty of Mr. Henry Wiggin; the Southern District Library, in Heath Mill Lane, was opened that day, and the stone was then laid for the Eastern District Library, Gosta Green. As regarded the opening of the Central Reference Library that day, in that splendid room, the whole town had cause to be joyful, and might well congratulate itself upon the success which had attended the efforts of the Committee selected by their representatives in the Town Council to make so useful an institution so complete and so inviting. All honour, then, to those who suggested, supported, and assisted in carrying out these grand objects. The name of Alderman E. C. Osborne, who, in 1859, moved in the Town Council the resolutions which led to the town's meeting in 1860, adopting the Act, and who had since, whether as chairman or committee man, inde-

fatigably worked in forwarding the object, should be specially mentioned. Mr. Jacob Phillips and Mr. Samuel Timmins, as members of the Committee, should also be specially mentioned as having rendered good service; but were he (the Mayor) to mention each and all of the gentlemen who had served on that Committee, they would agree with him in saying they were well deserving of their special thanks for the great services they had rendered to the town. The Birmingham Reference Free Library appeared to be the first of its kind that had been opened where the erection of the building and the supply of books had been paid for solely out of the rates, and in this respect they might consider that they had set an example worthy of being followed elsewhere. The Adderley Library, on the borders of the borough, was more appreciated every day, and as that part of the town became more densely populated, the wisdom of the Town Council in accepting the generous gift of Mr. Adderley would become more apparent. In the five Free Libraries now open to the public, there were 39,000 volumes for the use of strangers as well as citizens, properly recommended. The number of persons who had qualified as borrowers was 8,320; the issue of books averaged 4,925 weekly, and the number of persons who visited the various News Rooms was estimated at very few short of 6,000 every week, so that a vast amount of knowledge was being accumulated, which could not fail to be of benefit to the whole town hereafter.

Mr. Dawson then delivered an eloquent address, from which we make a few extracts on the subject of Libraries:

“Where I to tell you all that I think a library is, your patience would be exhausted and my strength would be in like plight. But there are one or two things it will be well to call to mind. A great library contains the diary of the human race; for it is with the human race as with the individuals of it: our memories go back but a little way, or,

if they go back far, they pick up but here a date and there an occurrence half forgotten. But when a man keeps a diary of his life, he can at any time bring the whole of its scenes before him. The memory of the human race is just as short, as fragmentary and as accidental as the memory of the individual; but when the books of mankind are gathered together in a room like this, we can sit down and read the solemn story of man's history, from his birth, through all his mutations, and so in learning the history of man we reverence our ancestors, ascertain our own pedigree, and find the secret sources of the life we ourselves are now living. Remember we know well only the great nations whose books we possess; of others we know nothing or but little. The great Hebrew people—their solemn thoughts and their glorious story—lie open to us because we have their books. We know the Greek, we are familiar with the Roman, but as for the nameless tribes which peopled the far deserts of the world—unchronicled, bookless, libraryless—we have but a name, a date or two, a few myths, some trumpery legends, and that is all. But here in this room are gathered together the great diaries of the human race, the record of its thoughts, its struggles, its doings, and its ways. The great consulting room of a wise man is a library. When I am in perplexity about life, I have but to come here, and, without fee or reward, I commune with the wisest souls that God has blessed the world with. If I want a discourse on immortality Plato comes to my help. If I want to know the human heart Shakspeare opens all its chambers. Whatever be my perplexity or doubt I know exactly the great man to call to me, and he comes in the kindest way, he listens to my doubts and tells me his convictions. So that a library may be regarded as the solemn chamber in which a man can take counsel with all that have been wise and great and good and glorious amongst the men that have gone before him."

The speaker then alluded to the immediate utilities of a library; dwelt upon the importance of its being a Corporation Library, free for the use of the whole town; drew loving attention to the fact of its being also a Reference Library; enlarged upon the uses to which such a collection of books could be put, and concluded his address in the following words:—

“Now, Mr. Mayor, we probably could not part without some little looking forward to the future. For man’s part in immortality is so great that he always looks beyond that day when ‘the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved;’ beyond the day when these earthen vessels so gloriously shaped by the Almighty potter shall have fallen back again into shapeless clay; and he longs, with a pardonable desire, that his name may be remembered, when the place that knew him knows him no more. That glorious weakness I hope we all of us share—that we would fain haunt some place in this world even when the body is gone; that we desire that our names shall be gratefully spoken of when we have long passed away to join the glorious dead. If this be your passion, there are few things that I would more willingly share with you than the desire that, in days to come, when some student, in a fine rapture of gratitude, as he sits in this room, may for a moment call to mind the names of the men who, by speech and by labour, by the necessary agitation or the continuous work, took part in founding this Library. There are few places I would rather haunt after my death than this room, and there are few things I would have my children remember more than this, that this man spoke the discourse at the opening of this glorious Library, the first-fruits of a clear understanding that a great town exists to discharge towards the people of that town the duties that a great nation exists to discharge towards the people of that nation—that a town exists here

by the grace of God, that a great town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped, all the highest, loftiest, and truest ends of man's intellectual and moral nature. I wish then for you, Mr. Mayor, and for myself, that, in years to come, when we are in some respects forgotten, still now and then, in this room, the curious questions may be asked: Who was Mayor on that famous day? who said grace before that famous banquet? who returned thanks for that gracious meal? who gathered these books together? who was the first man that held that new office of librarian? I trust his name will be printed whenever the name of this Corporation appears. What his title is to be I don't know—whether it is to be Town Librarian or Corporation Librarian—but I envy him whatever it may be, and I am glad the Corporation has given itself an officer who represents intellect—that it looks upward deliberately and says, 'We are a Corporation who have undertaken the highest duty that is possible to us; we have made provision for our people—for *all* our people—and we have made a provision of God's greatest and best gifts unto man.'"

Thus step by step the great work was carried on. In 1866 we had provided the Reference Library, the Central Lending Library and News Room, the Libraries in Constitution Hill, Deritend, and Adderley Park, each with its News Room. In purchasing books for the Reference Library, the Committee were guided by three principles:—I. That the Library should, as far as practicable, represent every phase of human thought, and every variety of opinion. II. That books of permanent value and of standard interest should form the principal portion of the Library, and that modern and popular books should be added from time to time, as they are published. III. That it should contain those rare and and costly works which are generally out of the reach of individual students and collectors, and which are not usually

found in provincial or private Libraries. At the time of opening, the Reference Library contained 16,195 volumes in general literature, and 2,030 of specifications of patents; and in the 54 days of 1866 on which the room was open 11,468 books were issued, which was an average of 212·3 per day. The Central Lending Library contained 11,276 volumes, had 7,148 borrowers, and made during the year 164,120 issues, or a daily average of 588·2. The Constitution Hill Library contained 7,065 volumes, issued 36,747, or a daily average of 142; the Deritend had 4,447 volumes, was open 51 days, and issued 8,622 volumes. Adderley Park had 2,345 volumes, and issued during the year 9,383.

The Gosta Green News Room was opened on February 1, 1868; the Lending Library in the June following: the Act, as we have already stated, was adopted in February, 1860, so that in eight years the scheme of the Committee was realised. A large Central, and four Branch Libraries, with News Rooms and an Art Gallery, had been provided for the free use of the people, and it now only required time and money to make them all that such institutions should be. Unfortunately the revenue is limited to a rate of one penny in the pound, and the interest on the loan for building consumes a large portion of the returns every year. The first outlay for books was also necessarily a very large one, and thus, to some extent, the future income was anticipated; and for the next three years the Committee were compelled to practise the most rigid economy in the management, and could not increase the books in the manner they desired, or commensurate with the wants of the various Libraries.

On the 11th of February, 1868, the following important report was presented to the Council:—

The Free Libraries Committee report that they have received from Messrs. Martin and Chamberlain, architects, accounts of the expenses incurred in connection with the erection of the Central Reference Library Buildings, and of providing and fixing the fittings and furniture therein, from which it

appears that the total cost of erecting and completing the building, inclusive of the sum of £550 required for completing the fittings to the Shakspeare Library, amounts to the sum of £14,896. 2s. 6d.

The sum appropriated by the Council for the purpose of erecting the buildings in accordance with Mr. Martin's designs was £12,500.

The actual cost of erecting the same, in accordance with such designs, amounted to £10,310 19 5

And the further expenditure has been as follows:—

Room for School of Art	120 17 6
Messrs. Branson and Murray, fittings	2,297 3 8
Messrs. Haden and Son, for warming apparatus, etc.	389 16 0
Mr. Samuel Thomas, for locks and ironmongery	28 1 9
The Birmingham Gas Company, for pipes and fittings	146 6 4
Mrs. Newbold, for painting, colouring, etc.	146 19 2
Messrs. Crichley, Wilde, and Co., iron gallery, staircases, etc.	370 17 3
Messrs. Tonks and Sons, for brass rods and brackets	76 18 1
Messrs. Messenger and Son, for gas fittings	388 5 6
Mrs. Newbold, for decorating and painting fittings	69 17 10

£14,346 2 6

Amount as agreed for the fittings to the Shakspeare Memorial

Library 550 0 0

£14,896 2 6

In addition to this, the architects' charges and commission in connection with the erection and completion of the Libraries amounted to £972. 5s.

In March, 1869, another important event in the history of the Libraries occurred. This will be best explained by the following letter from Mr. Arthur Ryland, which was read by the Mayor to the Council, at its meeting on the 16th of that month:—

7, Cannon Street, Birmingham,
March 11th, 1869.

Dear Mr. Mayor—On behalf and in the names of Messrs. Aldermen Avery and Wigin, and Messrs. Councillors Barker and Hinks, and myself, I desire to inform the Town Council, through your Worship, that we are willing to transfer to them at cost price, if the Council desire to have it, a plot of land, with the buildings standing on it, adjoining to the Free Library in Edmund Street, which we purchased, on the 2nd instant, at auction, for the sum of £4,832. We should expect to receive at once the amount we have paid for deposit (namely £483); and we should make it a condition that the Council should grant to the Midland Institute the space below the level of the first floor story of the Reference Library, upon such terms as the Council and the Institute might mutually agree upon.

We made the purchase because we knew that the Library Committee

were of opinion that it would be necessary to extend the building for the Reference Library in the course of a few years, and we feared that if the Council should have to negotiate for the land, either under the provisions of an Act of Parliament for a compulsory sale or otherwise, a very much larger price would have to be paid than if it were now bought, at public auction, by a private individual; and we also knew that the Midland Institute were in great want of more class rooms.

The land measures, next to Edmund Street, 58 feet 9 inches, and contains, in the whole, 604 square yards, and the price we have purchased it at is at the rate of £8 a yard.

The conditions of sale require the purchase to be completed on the 24th June next.

It will be necessary for us to have an early answer to this offer, as the investigation of the title must be at once made, and we should wish, if the offer be accepted, to hand over the papers to the Town Clerk, so as to avoid unnecessary costs. If we should, by delay, have to incur costs of such an investigation ourselves, we should have to add the amount of such costs to the purchase money. Moreover we have had a proposal made to us by the owner of the adjoining property to which we must give an early reply. This proposal would afford accommodation to the Institute, but would deprive the Corporation of the opportunity of extending the Reference Library building.

I am, dear Mr. Mayor, yours truly,

ARTHUR RYLAND.

Henry Holland, Esq., Mayor of Birmingham.

The letter was referred to the Free Libraries Committee, with instructions to consider the offer made, and to report to the Council in April as to the advisability of accepting it. On April the 6th, the Committee reported that they had for some time past been impressed with the necessity of making provision for an extension, at no distant period, of the accommodation for the Free Reference Library. An advertisement having appeared in the public newspapers that a considerable quantity of land in the neighbourhood, including a plot immediately adjoining the Library, was about to be offered for sale by auction, the Committee were induced to inquire whether any portion of it could be secured for the Council, and an attempt was made to obtain the omission or reservation at the sale of the piece of land adjoining the Library, on an understanding that the Committee would recommend the Council to purchase the same,

at a price not exceeding the average price of the land that might be sold in Edmund Street, less the value of the buildings thereon. In this endeavour the Committee were unsuccessful, the vendor's agent having declined to negotiate at a less price than £12. 10s. per square yard, and as, without the authority of the Council, they were unable to bid at the auction, the opportunity of acquiring the land would have been lost had not Messrs. Aldermen Ryland, Avery, and Wiggin, and Councillors Barker and Hinks, generously acceded to the suggestion of the Committee to become purchasers of the lot in question, which they accordingly purchased at the rate of £8 per square yard, at which price they offered it to the Council, as agreed between them and the Committee.

In accordance with the condition contained in Mr. Ryland's letter, that the Council should grant to the Midland Institute the space below the level of the first floor story of the Reference Library upon such terms as the Council and the Institute might agree upon, the committee applied to the Council of the Institute to ascertain the terms upon which such arrangement might be effected, and have received the following reply :—

Resolved—"That the Free Libraries Committee be informed that, while gratefully acknowledging the kindly feeling evinced towards the Birmingham and Midland Institute in the offer conveyed in Mr. Ryland's letter to the Mayor, this Council regret that the conditions involved in the offer make it undesirable for them to accept it."

The Committee being of opinion that the whole of the land will be required for the purpose of the Reference Library, strongly recommend the Council to accept the offer. They regret that the consideration of this offer admits of no postponement, and that the Council has no alternative but to accept or reject the recommendation now submitted. They are aware that at the present moment the financial position of the Free Libraries is not favourable to the incurring additional expenditure, but have regard to the annual increase in the amount of the library rate, and the reduction in the payment of interest yearly occurring, and to the fact that no building will be required on the land for some years, that the property now standing thereon will yield an annual rental of £62. 8s., which may be increased by the letting of a large vacant space in addition, and that by the exercise of a rigid economy in the ordinary expenditure of the existing libraries, a saving may be effected. Although therefore the committee feel that some temporary inconvenience will arise from the immediate purchase, yet the resources of the institution will speedily enable them to overcome it, and

they are of opinion that the opportunity now offered for purchasing the land should be embraced, as it cannot occur again, and if neglected, the possibility of increasing the accommodation for the Library will be lost for ever.

The Council resolved—That subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Treasury, the Free Libraries Committee be authorised and instructed to purchase the 604 square yards of land in Edmund Street, with the buildings now standing thereon, referred to in their report now submitted, at a cost not exceeding £8 per square yard, for the purpose of the extension of the Reference Library, and that the said Committee be further instructed to obtain the approval of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to such purchase, and to the borrowing the amount required for that purpose, under the provisions of the "Free Libraries Act, 1855."

By this wise act the future extension of the Library is provided for; and it will now be possible to render it equal to the demands which an ever-increasing population and the growing desire for knowledge will make upon its resources.

At its meeting on May 3, 1870, the Council, on the recommendation of the Free Libraries Committee, increased the salary of Mr. J. D. Mullins, chief librarian, from £200 to £250 per annum.

We have now brought our history of the Birmingham Free Libraries down to the present time. The report of the Committee for 1870 is before us. It is the ninth annual report, and the Committee have to record the continued usefulness of the Libraries, News Rooms, and Art Gallery, and the increasing appreciation of them by the public. The only drawback is the limitation of the funds at the Committee's disposal. Out of about £4,500 produced by the penny rate, nearly £2,000 is required annually to provide for interest on and repayment of loans; thus leaving only £2,500 for the maintenance of six Libraries and News Rooms, and the Free Art Gallery. As regards the latter, material assistance has been afforded by a special fund, raised by voluntary contributions; and, therefore, the want of adequate support from the rate has not been so keenly

felt as in the case of the Libraries and News Rooms. So great is the pressure upon the funds of the Committee, that only £125 has, during the year, been expended in the purchase of new books for the five Lending Libraries—a very poor outlay in comparison with that of Manchester, where the expenditure on these books is upwards of £1,000 per annum. The effect of this difference is traceable in the respective issues from the two sets of Libraries—Manchester (with but a slightly larger population than Birmingham) having an issue of 477,544 volumes a year, while Birmingham has an issue of 287,515 volumes, a considerable decrease on the issues of the preceding year; and this, as the Committee believe, is attributable to the small amount at their disposal for expenditure in the purchase of new books for the Lending Libraries. The Reference Library maintains the interest it has commanded from the moment of its opening. The News Rooms, also, have been thronged during the year; even beyond their capacity, large as this is. It says much for the influence exerted by such institutions, that, notwithstanding this pressure upon the News Rooms, many persons frequently waiting their turns for the newspapers, no difficulty of any kind has occurred, the utmost order and good feeling being manifested even on the most trying occasions. In great measure, doubtless, this result is due to the vigilance and courtesy of the librarians and their assistants. The Committee have much pleasure in recording their sense of the services rendered by the staff, as a body; from the chief librarian to the youngest assistant, they appear to be animated by the desire of doing their duty to the Corporation, and of making the libraries a credit to the town.

The following table gives the number of volumes in the whole of the Birmingham Free Libraries at the end of 1870:—

	Theology, Ecclesiastical History, and Moral Philosophy.	History, Biography, Voyages, and Travels.	Law, Politics, and Commerce.	Arts, Sciences, and Natural History.	Miscellaneous: including Poetry, the Drama, Fiction, Periodicals, etc.	Juvenile Books.	Patents.	TOTAL.
Reference Library...	1,987	5,891	1,329	4,311	10,582	—	2,490	26,590
Central Lending ...	408	2,445	134	1,004	8,199	405	—	12,595
Constitution Hill...	221	1,643	96	603	2,545	207	—	5,315
Deritend	144	1,507	59	367	2,768	52	—	4,897
Gosta Green	273	1,146	53	449	2,726	120	—	4,767
Adderley Park	161	479	37	184	1,693	46	—	2,600
	3,194	13,111	1,708	6,918	28,513	830	2,490	56,764

The total aggregate issue of books for the same year was:—Reference Library, 124,368; Central Lending Library, 153,752; Constitution Hill, 44,149; Deritend, 39,179; Gosta Green, 46,245; and Adderley Park, 4,190; total, 411,883. It will be seen from these returns that the daily issue from the Lending Libraries is upwards of 1,000 volumes—a number not at all proportionate to the large population of the town; especially when we remember that every inhabitant can borrow books without any payment whatever.

During the year the following additions were made to the Reference Library:—

By gift (including 79 volumes of Specifications, Journal, etc., of Patents, presented by the Commissioners of Patents)	479
By additions to the Shakspeare Library, (given by the Shakspeare Memorial Committee)	986
Continuations of Periodicals and Works already in the Library.....	245
By transfer from other Libraries	4
By other additions.....	432
	2,146

This Library now contains 26,590 volumes, arranged in the following classes:—

Theology, Ecclesiastical History, and Moral Philosophy	1,987
History, Biography, Voyages, and Travels	5,891
Arts, Sciences, and Natural History	4,311
Law, Politics, and Commerce	1,329
Dictionaries, Encyclopædias, etc.	507
Poetry and the Drama, including the gifts to the Shakspeare Memorial Library.....	4,243
Miscellaneous	5,832
Patent Library	2,490
	26,590

We quote from the report the following interesting information in reference to the books most in demand :—

In *Theology, Moral Philosophy, and Ecclesiastical History* :—Alford's Greek Testament ; The Commentaries on the Bible, by Clarke, by Henry, and by Scott ; on the New Testament, by Barnes, by Lange, and by Olshausen ; Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul ; Cruden's Concordance ; Essays and Reviews ; F. W. Robertson's Sermons ; Smith's Dictionary of the Bible ; Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature ; Liddon's Our Lord's Divinity ; Lecky's History of Morals ; Lewes's History of Philosophy ; Wesley's Works ; Mill's Logic ; History of the Jews, by Josephus ; Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History ; Stanley's Jewish Church ; Milman's History of the Jews ; Hook's Church Dictionary ; Cobbett's Protestant Reformation ; Bishop Browne on the Thirty-nine Articles ; Bain's Philosophical Works.

In *Geography* :—The "Complete Atlas" of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge ; Johnston's Royal and Physical Atlases ; The "Dispatch" Atlas ; Somerville's Physical Geography ; Johnston's General Gazetteer ; McCulloch's Geographical Dictionary ; Knight's Geography of the British Empire ; Blackie's Imperial Gazetteer ; Ansted's Physical Geography ; Hughes's Geography.

In *History and Topography* :—Froude's, Hume's, Knight's, Macaulay's and White's Histories of England ; Jardine's Gunpowder Plot ; Partington's History of London ; Dugdale's Warwickshire ; Borrow's Wild Wales ; Journal of our Life in the Highlands ; Beattie's Scotland, Illustrated ; Maxwell's Irish Rebellion ; Thackeray's Irish Sketch Book ; Murray's Handbook for the Continent ; Carlyle's French Revolution ; Motley's Dutch Republic ; Bossoli's War in Italy ; Gibbon's Roman Empire ; Chamber's, Kinglake's, and Russell's Histories of the Crimean War ; Kitto's History of Palestine ; Kaye's Sepoy War ; Allom and Wright's China ; Cumming's South Africa ; Baker's Albert N'Yanza ; Baldwin's African Hunting ; Livingstone's South Africa ; Lang's Queensland, Australia ; Dickens's American Notes ; Catlin's North American Indians ; Dixon's New America ; Burton's City of the Saints ; Sala's Diary in America ; Russell's Canada ; Dilke's Greater Britain.

In *Biography* :—Caulfield's Remarkable Characters ; Carlyle's Letters and Speeches of Cromwell ; Dickens's Life of Grimaldi ; Boswell's Johnson ; Diary of Samuel Pepys ; Stanhope's Life of Pitt ; Memorials of Thomas Hood ; Burke's Peerage and Landed Gentry ; Thackeray's Four Georges ; Newman's Apologia pro Vita Sua ; Men of the Time ; Smiles's Life of Boulton and Watt ; Imperial Dictionary of Biography ; Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology ; Charles Dickens, the Story of his Life.

In *Arts, Sciences, and Natural History* :—Ruskin's Stones of Venice ; Barnard's Water Colour Drawing ; Barnard's Foliage and Foreground Drawing ; Bell's Anatomy of Expression ; Owen Jones's Grammar of Ornament, and 1,001 Initial Letters ; Dresser's Decorative Design ; Ruskin's Elements of Drawing ; Hogarth's Works ; The Turner Gallery ; Pugin's

Gothic Ornament; Pugin's Ecclesiastical Ornament; Cundall's Examples of Ornament; Cottingham's Metal Worker's Director; Plant Form, by Hulme; Humphrey's Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages; Antiquités de l'Empire de Russie; Les Arts Somptuaires; King's Study Book of Mediæval Architecture and Art; Humphrey's Coin Collectors' Manual; Tymms and Wyatt on Illuminating; Percy's Metallurgy; Hewitt's True Science of Music; Knight's Scroll Ornaments; Faraday's Electricity; Pitman's Works on Phonography; Fairbairn's Crests; Burke's Encyclopædia of Heraldry; Galloway's First and Second Steps in Chemistry; Macadam's Chemistry; Williams's Chemistry for Students; Wilson's Inorganic Chemistry; Muspratt's Chemistry; Hofman's Chemistry; Copland's Dictionary of Medicine; Tyndall's Heat considered as a Mode of Motion; Tyndall on Sound; Barnard Smith's Arithmetic and Algebra; Todhunter's and Colenso's Mathematical Works; Lardner's Handbooks of Natural Philosophy; Ure's Dictionary of Arts and Manufactures; Tomlinson's Dictionary of Arts and Manufactures; Herschel's Astronomy; Chambers's Astronomy; Balfour's Class Book of Botany; Bentley's Manual of Botany; Hooker's British Ferns; Lyell's Principles of Geology; Miller's Sketch Book of Popular Geology; Carpenter's Animal Physiology; Huxley's Physiology; Audubon's Birds of America; Cassell's Natural History; Morris's British Birds; Humphrey's Moths and Butterflies; Prichard's Natural History of Man; Gall and Spurzheim's Physiognomical System; Maury's Physical Geography of the Sea; Wood's Natural History; Stephens's Book of the Farm; Loudon's British Wild Flowers; Blaine's Rural Sports.

In *Law, Politics, Commerce, &c.*:—Mill's Political Economy; Fawcett's Political Economy; Lewis's Best Form of Government; Kay's Social Condition of the People; Stephen's and Blackston's Commentaries on the Laws of England; McCulloch's Dictionary of Commerce; Creasy's History of the English Constitution; Mayhew's London Labour and London Poor.

In *Dictionaries and Encyclopædias*:—Encyclopædia Britannica; Encyclopædia Metropolitana; Webster's English Dictionary; Smith's Latin-English Dictionary; Godwin's Latin-English Dictionary; Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon; Elwe's French-English Dictionary; Beeton's Dictionary of Useful Information; Chambers's Encyclopædia; Worcester's English Dictionary.

In *Poetry and the Drama*:—The Works of Burn's, Byron, Eliza Cook, Mrs. Hemans, Hood, Longfellow, Macaulay, Milton, Tennyson, Shakespeare, Lytton, Sheridan; The London Stage; Inchbald's British Drama; Aytoun's Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers.

In *Miscellaneous Literature*:—Bacon's Essays; Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, and Essays; Chambers's Book of Days; Chambers's Encyclopædia of English Literature; Defoe's Works; Hallam's Literary History; Hood's Works; Jerrold's Works; Lamb's Works; Macaulay's Essays; Smiles's Self Help; Valpy's Variorum and Delphin Classics; English Translations of Classical Authors, published by Bohn; the Volumes of the Reviews, Magazines, and Newspapers; Emerson's Essays; The Percy Anecdotes; Ruskin's Works; The Traveller's Library.

In *Books relating to Birmingham*:—Hutton's History of Birmingham; The Town Orier; West's Warwickshire.

We are enabled, through the courtesy of the Chief Librarian, to present a statement of the money expended in books since the commencement of the Libraries in 1860. In the Reference Library the amount has been between £6,000 and £7,000; Central Lending Library, nearly £1,700; Constitution Hill, nearly £1,800; Deritend, £450; Gosta Green, £210; Adderley Park, £58; general, £36; newspapers, £1,413; making a total of about £12,000 thus expended. The reason that the Constitution Hill Library has had so comparatively large a sum expended upon it, is that it was the only Library open from 1860 to 1863, and, therefore, the only one for which books had, for a long time, to be provided.

The statistics furnished by the working of the Free Libraries afford grounds for serious reflection. We shall first quote the figures, and then direct attention to some of the most instructive of these returns, and it will be seen that in many instances they are of a nature for surprise and regret rather than for congratulation. The number of borrowers during the year 1870, at the various Libraries, were as follows :—

Central Lending Library	5,501
Constitution Hill	1,909
Deritend	1,430
Gosta Green	1,567
Adderley Park	165
	10,572

The population of Birmingham at the present time is upwards of 343,000, and out of this large number of persons only 10,500 avail themselves of the opportunity of borrowing books. The actual borrowers include men, women, and children, and it will be seen by the next table we quote that nearly 7,500 of these are under the age of twenty-five.

The return of the ages of borrowers is as follows :—

Under 14.....	1,807	46 to 50.....	194
14 to 20.....	4,340	51 „ 55.....	103
21 „ 25.....	1,278	56 „ 60.....	88
26 „ 30.....	837	Over 60.....	58
31 „ 35.....	478	Not stated	739
36 „ 40.....	429		
41 „ 45.....	221		10,572

This table shows that only thirty out of every thousand of the inhabitants *borrow* books. Of course, this does not give the full number of readers, because a whole household may use the books taken out by one borrower. But making the largest allowance possible, and supposing that five persons read each book, this would only give 50,000 readers of the books in the libraries, or 145 in each 1,000 of the population. This strange and startling comparison of the number of readers and the number who do not read at all, will be rendered still more strange and startling by the following table, which gives the trades of the borrowers :—

Agents.....	66	Filers	14
Apprentices.....	144	Glass Cutters and Blowers	75
Architects and Surveyors.....	25	Grocers	88
Artists.....	43	Gun Makers	191
Assistants and Shopmen	294	Housekeepers.....	61
Bakers, Confectioners, etc.	55	Japanners.....	33
Bedstead Makers	33	Jewellers, Goldsmiths, etc.	576
Blacksmiths, Forgers, etc.	39	Labourers, etc.	36
Bookbinders, etc.	32	Lacquerers, etc.....	40
Boot and Shoemakers	68	Lamp and Chandelier Makers.....	66
Brush Makers.....	39	Letter Carriers	12
Brassfounders, etc.	292	Manufacturers and Merchants.....	44
Building Trades.....	55	Metalsmiths, etc.	119
Cabinet Makers.....	149	Milliners and Dress Makers.....	116
Carpenters and Joiners	26	Nail Makers	13
Chemists and Druggists	53	Painters	113
Clergymen and Ministers	24	Pawnbrokers	33
Clerks, Bookkeepers, etc.	1,306	Platers.....	95
Commercial Travellers.....	54	Pocket Book Makers.....	12
Curriers	18	Policemen	9
Die Sinkers	44	Porters, etc.....	113
Errand Boys	110	Printers and Compositors	235
Engineers and Machinists	179	Railway Employés	37
Engravers	142	Rule Makers	22

Saddlers	41	Warehousemen, &c.	289
Scholars and Students	1,213	Watch and Clock Makers.....	30
Schoolmasters.....	162	Wire Workers.....	30
Servants	23	Wood Turners.....	20
Tailors and Drapers	166	Miscellaneous.....	1,112
Tin Plate Workers.....	62	No occupation.....	1,886
Tool Makers.....	69		
Tube Makers	46	Total.....	10,572

If we analyse this table, we shall find results that will astonish many of our readers. Brassfounding is one of our staple trades, and the numbers employed at the various branches of this important industry are estimated at over 8,000, of whom 6,000 are men and boys, and 2,000 women and girls; and yet only 292 are returned as borrowers working at this trade. But there is even a more strange and astounding fact to record than this. In the button trade some 6,000 people find employment, and yet that trade is not represented at all among the borrowers of books from our Lending Libraries! The gun makers, numbering between 7,000 and 8,000 persons, give us 191 borrowers; the glass workers of the town, estimated at some 2,000, provide 75 borrowers; and the whole of the building trades, employing some thousands of workers, give 55. The jewellers, as might have been anticipated, are considerably above the average of other trades. This industry gives employment to some 7,000 persons, and the trade is represented by 576 borrowers. The printers and compositors are also above the average, and supply 235 borrowers from between 2,000 and 3,000 persons engaged in that craft. The letter carriers, who number nearly 130, have only 12 borrowers; and out of a force of 400 men, the police only nine.

We might pursue this examination through every trade named in the list, and the result would be found to be the same. At present only a very small per centage of the inhabitants of the town use the Free Libraries, and spend their leisure in making themselves acquainted with

the immortal productions of our poets, historians, philosophers, novelists, and scientific writers. These returns show quite as forcibly as education statistics, that the greater number of our people are yet untaught, that

Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, has ne'er unroll'd ;

and prove the necessity for a large and comprehensive system of primary education for the children of the present generation. One fact in these returns is of good augury. We mentioned before that of the 10,500 borrowers, over 7,000 are under the age of 25 ; and of these over 4,000 are between the ages of 14 and 20. This, as far as it goes, is encouraging ; but when we call to mind that there are probably 70,000 persons in Birmingham between these ages, the 4,000 taking books from the Libraries are indeed a small minority. Year by year we trust that this minority will increase until the readers become the majority. It is a melancholy reflection that so few of the people are able to taste the rich delight and share in the ennobling pleasure provided by a good Library. That the glorious realm of poesy and song should remain a charmed demesne, into which so few enter to participate in the banquet which genius has provided for the delectation of all, is a fact of sad import to all who have found their truest enjoyment and spent their happiest hours in yielding their minds to the fascination of the lords of the imagination, and the masters of the human heart. In various parts of the town are now treasured up the greatest productions of man's intellect—the works of poets, philosophers, historians, and other great writers—and these treasures are brought, as it were, to the very doors of the people, and can be enjoyed without cost ; and yet only a comparatively small number avail themselves of the great and priceless boon. The wonders of poetry and science, the wealth of study and experiment, the

stories of other lands, and the lives, customs and manners of other nations than our own, are freely offered for the improvement and edification of our toiling thousands; and only a few of those thousands are yet alive to the inexpressible advantages of such possessions. The mere statement of such a state of things ought to inspire every friend of education with more zeal and enthusiasm in the noble work in which he is engaged. Every one who can forward the great task of the present, and help in making the future life of our people nobler than the past; who can assist at all in advancing their labours of instruction, should remember that

Ignorance is the curse of God,

Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to Heaven;

and that he who labours to lessen the one and increase the other is engaged in a holy crusade against an enemy whose triumphs are crime, suffering, want, and woe.

It will be an interesting employment to watch these yearly returns, for, by their increase—and we venture to predict that there will be an increase—the progress of education, and the development of a literary taste among the people, may be traced with a general approximation to accuracy.

THE SHAKSPERE MEMORIAL LIBRARY.

To Birmingham belongs the honour of having reared the noblest monument to the memory of England's greatest poet. The Shakspeare Memorial Library, in which will be gathered not only all the editions of the marvellous dramas which Shakspeare wrote, but the thousands of works which those dramas have inspired other people to write, will be a perpetual memorial of the greatness of the universal and "many-sided" genius, in honour of whose name it has been founded. It is also most fitting that in Birmingham, the real capital of the county in which Shakspeare was born, the proposal of such a memorial should have originated, and in a few years afterwards have been practically carried out.

This noble work was first suggested by Mr. Samuel Timmins, at a Shakspeare celebration dinner, on April 23, 1858. For three years the subject was not further mooted, but it was not forgotten. On the 20th of April, 1861, the following letter from Mr. George Dawson, appeared in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* :—

PROPOSAL FOR A SHAKSPERE LIBRARY.

To the Editor of Aris's Gazette.

Sir,—The near approach of the anniversary of Shakspeare's birth-day reminds me to claim from you the fulfilment of a promise to give me space enough to propose a favourite plan of mine, and to ask the help, in carrying it out, of those who may agree with me in its desirableness. I want to see founded in Birmingham a Shakspeare Library, which should contain (as far as practicable) every edition and every translation of Shakspeare; all the commentators, good, bad, and indifferent; in short, every book connected with the life or works of our great poet. I would add portraits of

Shakspeare, and all the pictures, &c., illustrative of his works. This collection should have a room devoted exclusively to it; a small endowment, and some trustees zealous for its preservation. It might be put under the care of the Council of the Midland Institute, or the Library Committee of the Corporation, or of the Old Library, as may be determined by its founders. I need not set forth the uses of such a library, nor the fitness of Warwickshire possessing such a collection. My proposal is not addressed to those who need argument on such points. I simply ask communication from those who are willing to join in this work. I will, should such a library be founded, make over to it the best part of my Shaksperian books.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

GEORGE DAWSON.

THE BROOK HOUSE,

Near Bromsgrove,

April 15th, 1861.

The suggestion was now before the public; but three more years elapsed before any active steps were taken to give effect to the proposal. In June, 1863, the Shakspeare Club took the project into consideration, and on July 10, a meeting was held at the Philosophical Institution, Cannon Street, the Rev. Charles Evans in the chair, at which subscriptions were announced and a committee elected. Mr. J. H. Chamberlain, Mr. George Jabet, and Mr. Samuel Timmins were appointed honorary secretaries, and many donations were promised. At the meeting of the Town Council, August 4, the Mayor (Mr. Charles Sturge) read a letter addressed to him by the secretaries to the Shakspeare Tercentenary Celebration Committee, applying for the grant of a room in the Central Reference Library for the reception of editions of Shakspeare's works. The letter was referred to the Free Libraries Committee, with instructions to report to the Council thereon.

The Committee reported on November 24, stating that they had considered the application, and had had an interview with a deputation from the Shakspeare Memorial Committee, from whom they have received a statement of their requirements as follows:—

1. A room to be specially applied for the deposit of books consisting of the various editions of Shakspeare's Works, and the literature, etc., to which they have given rise.

2. Such Library to be placed under the same regulations as the Free Reference Library.

3. The Library to be maintained and augmented by the Free Library Committee, and all works purchased by them of the same class to be arranged in the Shakspeare Memorial Library.

4. The Library to be called the "Shakspeare Memorial Library."

5. That the Shakspeare Committee shall, if their funds allow, decorate the room in an appropriate manner.

The Committee had conferred with their architect, and were of opinion that the room shown on the plans of the Central Library as the librarian's room, and entered from the Reference Library, might be appropriated for the Shaksperian Library, and was well suited for the purpose: the dimensions of the room would be 20 ft. by 17 ft. 6 in., and 12 ft. high. The adaptation of this room to the proposed purpose would necessitate an additional expenditure of £40, and a further sum of £50 would be required for providing fittings and finishing superior to those specified in the contract. The Committee recommended that this room be exclusively appropriated for the purpose proposed, and that they be authorised to accede to the stipulations of the Shakspeare Committee, and take all necessary measures for carrying their recommendations into effect, proper accommodation for the librarian being provided in another part of the building.

The Council approved the recommendation; and on the 3rd of May, 1864, the Mayor (Mr. W. Holliday) informed the Council that on Saturday, the 23rd of April, the Shakspeare Memorial Library Committee presented to him, on

behalf of the Council, a collection of books (yet to be considerably increased), comprising numerous valuable editions and works in illustration of the poet and his writings. The presentation was accompanied by the following address, which will more fully explain the nature of the gift, and the conditions upon which it comes into the possession of the Council :—

To the Worshipful the Mayor and Corporation of the Borough of Birmingham.

In pursuance of the course adopted during the last summer by those persons who were anxious to do honour to the memory of Shakspeare, in the most fitting manner, by founding a Shakspeare Memorial Library in Birmingham—a library which, in itself monumental, should contain each edition of Shakspeare's works, and, as far as it might be possible, include the whole range of Shaksperian literature, the committee appointed to carry this purpose into effect avail themselves of this, the tercentenary of the birthday of the poet, to present to the Corporation of Birmingham the works which have been given and purchased for the library up to the present time; a list whereof with the names of the donors, is hereto appended. In addition to the works given, a sum of money, amounting at present to about the sum of £450, has been subscribed, and from time to time, as occasion offers, will be expended by the Shakspeare Memorial Library Committee in the purchase of books to be added to the library, or in such other manner as may seem to them desirable in carrying out the original intention of the founders.

It may be desirable to embody in this presentation the terms on which the Committee, acting on behalf of the donors and subscribers, propose to give the collection of books to the Corporation; which terms, it is understood, have been accepted and agreed to by the Council of the borough.

1. That a room be specially appropriated for the deposit of the books.
2. That such Library be placed under the same regulations as the Free Reference Library.
3. That such Library be maintained and augmented by the Free Library Committee, and all works of the same class purchased by them, or by the Shakspeare Memorial Library Committee, to be placed and arranged in the Shakspeare Memorial Library.

4. That such Library be called "The Shakspeare Memorial Library."

5. That the room in which such Library is placed be exclusively appropriated for the purposes thereof.

The Committee feel impressed with the conviction that, in thus celebrating the three hundredth birthday of the man who combined the most profound knowledge of the human heart with the mightiest power of portraying its workings; of the man who added to the most vivid imagination of the poet the most minute observation of nature, and who, by virtue of this wonderful combination, has perfected works teeming with delight and

instruction to mankind, they have laid the foundation of no temporary or ephemeral work, but have begun to found an institution which, by combining in one spot the numerous editions of the poet's works and the literature which has sprung from this fruitful source, will draw to it for many succeeding generations all students of Shakspeare—an ever-increasing band—from all parts of the world.

It is the strength of this conviction which has determined the Committee to associate this Memorial Library with the Birmingham Corporation; feeling assured that while the town of Birmingham continues to exist, it will be a pride and a pleasure to the Council of the borough to maintain, support, and increase the Shakspeare Memorial Library.

To you, then, as representatives of the borough of Birmingham, we now present the books already collected, requesting your acceptance thereof on behalf of the town.

Signed, on behalf of the Committee,

"GEO. JABET,

"SAML. TIMMINS,

"JOHN HENRY CHAMBERLAIN,

"Honorary Secretaries."

To the foregoing address, the Mayor stated that he replied in the following terms, which he thought did not exaggerate the value of the gift or the generous exertions and intentions of the donors.

Gentlemen—On behalf of the Corporation and in the name of the town of Birmingham, I accept with cordial thanks this munificent proof of your goodwill to your fellow-citizens. Your gift will, I am sure, be welcomed by all, not only on account of its intrinsic value, or because it is prompted by such a considerate and intelligent sympathy with the intellectual wants of this town, but also because it is an evidence that we have among us a confederation of scholars and thinkers in whom the pursuit of Literature is at once the cause and the effect of manly and liberal sentiment, and of a generous zeal for extending to others that which has proved a delight and an ornament to themselves. That the propriety of the occasion might be a still further commendation of your gift, you have presented it on that day on which every Englishman has a right to feel more than usually proud of his country—a day on which, throughout the length and breadth of this land, every man who has the slightest tincture of education feels his heart beat higher within him when he remembers that he is the countryman of William Shakspeare. Of the many ways in which men have proposed to celebrate this day, it seems to me that this one which you have originated is the most rational and the most expressive of those feelings which this great anniversary inspires; for you do not seek to immortalise one whose immortality was achieved long before we were born, nor have you sought to describe or to extol in words that universal genius whose excellence eclipses all praise and "beggars all description;" but you have put into our hands the means of entering still more deeply into that inexhaustible treasury of thought and observation, of wit and fancy, of tenderness and

grandeur; and not only so, but you have enabled us to make a yet larger number to participate in this intellectual heritage. Gentlemen, the municipal body, who are the guardians of the peace and welfare of this town, have had their duty set before them this day in its noblest and most genial aspect, for they are reminded that it is their duty to encourage everything which can tend to refine the taste, to enlarge the conceptions, and to exalt the aims of the working classes. As for myself, gentlemen, I beg you to believe that I shall ever hold it a great honour and privilege to have presided on such an occasion as the present, and I shall continue to remember with pleasure that my year of office was associated with the name of Shakspeare, and with the good work which you have performed in his honour.

The Mayor added that on that occasion he had the honour of entertaining a large number of the Magistrates, the Council, and other influential inhabitants at breakfast at the Royal Hotel, and could truly say that he never presided over or took part in the proceedings of an assembly which began and ended in a more satisfactory or instructive manner.

The meeting was addressed by T. C. S. Kynnersley, Esq., Rev. Dr. Miller, Rev. R. W. Dale, Mr. George Dawson, M. D. Hill, Esq., Mr. George Jabet, Alderman Osborne, and Mr. S. Timmins.

In their report, presented to the Council on September 5, 1865, the Free Libraries Committee said:—

“A communication having been received from the Shakspeare Memorial Library Committee, expressive of its regret at finding the room appropriated by the Council for the reception of their library both too small and insufficiently lighted, and requesting that the room immediately beneath it—which, it is urged, is in all respects far more suitable—may be devoted to that purpose instead; that as the books of the Shakspeare Library will be protected by glass cases, it will be no objection that the lower room is not under the immediate inspection of the librarian; and the library being of a monumental character, many persons will desire to see it who will not require the use of the books for the purposes of study. Your committee having fully considered the application, are of opinion that the lower room will be a

more fitting depository for the Shaksperian collection than the one originally proposed, and that the latter room may be more conveniently used in connection with the Reference Library with which it communicates, and, therefore, recommend that they be authorised to comply with the application."

This recommendation was also approved by the Council.

In 1868, the committee reported that, in accordance with the deed of gift, the Town Council provided a suitable room set apart for the Shakspeare Library in the Central Reference and Lending Libraries, and, after various unavoidable delays, the Shakspeare Library was completed and opened to the public by Mr. Thos. Avery, mayor, on the 23rd of April, 1868. In the evening a banquet was given by his Worship in celebration of an event reflecting so much honour on the town, and in recognition of the generous labours of the Shakspeare Memorial Library Committee, consisting of his Worship the Mayor, M. D. Hill, Esq., Q.C., Rev. S. Bache, Rev. G. D. Boyle, Mr. J. T. Bunce, Mr. J. H. Chamberlain, Mr. George Dawson, Mr. Sebastian Evans, Rev. Charles Evans, Dr. Bell Fletcher, Mr. James Freeman, Mr. W. Harris, Dr. Heslop, Rev. T. N. Hutchinson, Dr. Ingleby, John Jaffray, Esq., Mr. George Jabet, Mr. G. J. Johnson, Mr. J. A. Langford, Thomas Lloyd, Esq., Mr. Thomas Martineau, Mr. William Martin, Mr. C. E. Mathews, Mr. Arthur Ryland, Mr. George Shaw, Mr. W. L. Sargant, Mr. J. H. Stack, Mr. Samuel Timmins, Mr. Edmund Tonks, and Rev. Charles Vince.

In addition to the donations of funds and books a subscription was commenced on the 23rd of April, 1868, and amounted to more than £50 per annum, to be devoted to the purchase of books. On the same day, special donations were offered for the completion of the oak carving on the book-cases, cornices, and panels of the door, by which the monumental character of the Library has been largely increased.

The generous donation by Charles Knight, Esq., of more than a hundred volumes, used in the preparation of his various editions of Shakspeare; of a copy of the Fourth Folio, by Messrs. Henry Sotheran and Co.; of the fac-simile of the First Folio, by Howard Staunton, Esq.; of an original quarto Henry V. (1608), and other volumes, by J. O. Halliwell, Esq.; of Boydell's splendid folio Shakspeare, by the late James Hunt, Esq.; of Knight's Pictorial Shakspeare, by the Birmingham Book Club; of the Shakspeare Society's publications by Sebastian Evans, Esq.; of memorials of the Tercentenary, by Samuel Whitfield, Esq.; the purchase by the Shakspeare Committee of Halliwell's magnificent folio edition, sixteen volumes, and of many other rare and valuable books, have already made the Library a splendid collection of Shaksperian works; and, in the words of Mr. Charles Knight, the Library already "realises the best idea of honouring the memory of the greatest of England's sons."

The Shakspeare books number (December, 1868):—

ENGLISH :	Editions.	No. of Vols.
Editions of the Works of Shakspeare.....	71	469
Separate Plays and Poems		87
Shaksperiana		439
		995
FRENCH :		
Editions of the Works of Shakspeare.....	4	31
Separate Plays and Poems		9
Shaksperiana		24
		64
GERMAN :		
Editions of the Works of Shakspeare.....	7	63
Separate Plays and Poems		15
Shaksperiana		98
		176
ITALIAN :		
Shaksperiana		3
DUTCH :		
Shaksperiana		1
		1239

The following are among the principal editions of the works of Shakspeare now in the library :—

The First Folio of 1623, photo-lithographed under the direction of H. Staunton ; the Fourth Folio, 1685; Pope's, 1725; Capell's, 1767; Hammer's, 1770 ; Johnson and Steeven's—2nd, 1778—3rd, 1785—4th, 1793—5th, 1803—6th, 1813 ; Bell's, 1788 ; Ayscough's, 1790 ; the "Boydell," 1802 ; Wood's, 1806 ; Malone and Boswell's, 1821 ; Chalmer's, 1823 ; Valpy's, 1832-34 ; Knight's "Pictorial," 1843 ; Collier's, 1853 ; Knight's "Stratford," 1856 ; Dyce's, 1857 ; Staunton's, 1858-60 ; White's (Boston, U.S.), 1861 ; C. and M. C. Clarke's, 1864 ; Keightley's, 1864 ; Marsh's "Reference," 1864 ; Halliwell's, 1853-65 ; the "Cambridge," 1863-66 ; Bowdler's, 1867 ; Dyce's, 1867.

At the annual meeting of the committee, donors, and subscribers, held on April 23, 1869, the following report, was presented :—

In accordance with the presentation deed to the Town Council, the donors and subscribers are presented with the following report on the occasion of the first meeting after the formal opening of the Shakspeare Memorial Library. At the last meeting in April, 1868, a subscription was commenced, and the amount promised for the year 1868-69, and now nearly collected, reached £50, and it is believed that as the interest and value of the library becomes more known, the annual income, as well as the donations of books, will continue to increase. Not only was this subscription for the purchase of books commenced, but special donations were given for the completion of the carving in the library room.

Since the last meeting of the Committee the following carving has been done by Mr. Barfield, viz. :—

Several elbows to bookcases, twenty capitals to standards of ditto, foliage in cornice over door, and the carving to the mouldings of architrave round the door, the cost being as follows, viz. :—

Cost of each elbow and capital over	£1	0	0
Cornice above door	3	0	0
Upper part of architrave	2	10	0
Sides of architrave (£3. 5s. each)	6	10	0

Colonel Ratcliff having offered to pay the cost of carving the large panel over the door, a design has been made for it by Mr. Barfield. This design is now fixed to the panel in question for inspection. The mouldings of the cornice are still unfinished, and about £12 is wanted to complete them ; and the Committee would also be glad of donations towards the finishing of the carving to the standards by the door, and particularly to the angles of the room.

During the year a large number of French and German Shakspearean works have been purchased and included in the catalogue, which forms part of the Reference Library Catalogue, but which will hereafter be printed separately by the generous offer of Messrs. Corns and Bartleet. In France,

Germany, and the United States great interest has been shown in the foundation and progress of the Library.

The Chevalier de Chatelain, M. Emile Deschamps, M. Daffray de la Mornay have contributed various French Shakspearean works. The German Shakspearean Society of Weimar, through the secretary, M. Schaeffer, have presented some valuable volumes, and have promised more hereafter. The following is a translation of the letter sent and the reply returned :—

“Weimar, 6th July, 1868.

“By the orders of the Council of the German Shakspeare Society of Weimar, the undersigned has the honour of transmitting, through the kind mediation of the house of Williams and Norgate, of London, to the Shakspeare Library of Birmingham, the *Shakspeare Jahrbuch* (vols. 1 to 3), so far as at present published, as a mark of the interest the society takes in the endeavours of the latter institution. The German Shakspeare Society will further do itself the honour of presenting to you the new translation of the Shakspearean dramas, now in the course of publication by George Reimer, of Berlin, as soon as it shall be complete. It will appear in twelve volumes, of which two volumes are out.

“Wishing you an active participation of all lovers of Shakspeare in your endeavours,

“I am, yours respectfully,

“By order,

“L. SCHAEFFER, Secretary.

“Mr. J. H. Chamberlain, Secretary of the

“Shakspeare Library, Birmingham.”

“Christ Church Buildings,

“Birmingham.

“Sir,

“We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind and courteous letter, accompanying the three volumes of the “Year Book,” presented to our Memorial Library by the council of your society. Permit us, on the behalf of the Shakspeare Memorial Library Committee, to thank your council for its liberality, and to assure you that we very highly value these proofs of the interest taken by your society in our endeavour to raise a worthy and lasting monument to our great poet.

“We have the honour to be, most faithfully yours,

“SAMUEL TIMMINS and J. H. CHAMBERLAIN,
Hon. Secs.

In America, Mr. R. Grant White has greatly assisted the library by procuring an insertion of a drawing of the room in *Harper's Weekly* newspaper, and by his earnest appreciation of the value of the memorial.

The fame of the library has been spread in Italy by the advocacy of the veteran Shakspeareans, Mr. and Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

Our Shakspeare Club has made its annual donation of a Shakspearean work, the one chosen being “Midsummer Night's Dream,” with 24 silhouettes by P. Konewka and A. Vogel.

During the year 200 volumes have been added to the library, of which 50 have been presented.

The additions made to the Library in 1869, were thus recorded in the report presented at the annual meeting on April 23, 1870:—

In accordance with the Presentation Deed to the Town Council of Birmingham, the hon. secs. have prepared the following report to the subscribers, assembled at the annual meeting, on the 23rd April, 1870, in the Library Room:—

Although no important money donations have been received during the year, the annual subscriptions have increased from £50. 7s., in 1868, to £74. 11s., in the years 1868-69 and 1869-70, and with the balance in hand have enabled the hon. secs. to increase the library by the addition of numerous and valuable works, a summary of which is appended to this report, and also a summary of the classes of books now forming the Library.

The amount expended in the purchase of books during the year is £291. 14s. 8d., and as the whole expenses of management (excepting small amounts, about £5, for stationery and postages) are defrayed by the Free Libraries Committee, nearly every shilling of the income is expended in the purchase of books. The recent sale of a fine collection of Shaksperiana, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge, of London, has enabled the hon. secretaries to enrich the library by the purchase of 100 volumes, all in fine condition, and many handsomely bound, at a cost of £41. 17s., and such an opportunity may not occur again for many years. The funds of the library would not allow the purchase of the rarer and costlier Shakspearean works, such as the first folio edition of the plays, which was sold for £360, or the third folio, which sold for £200; but it is hoped that such valuable works may be hereafter presented or bequeathed to the only literary memorial of Shakspeare, the library in which they will be reverently preserved for every succeeding age.

Although no such costly additions have been made during the year, the hon. secs. are glad to report that so much interest is felt in the progress and increase of the library, that a proposal has been made to purchase a splendid and unsurpassed copy of the first folio at the apparently high price of £520. A fund for this purpose was begun by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, with a donation of £50, and Mr. Thomas Avery and Mr. Charles Ratcliff promised £20 each; and the hon. secs. hope, from further promises of donations, that the Shakspeare Library may yet secure this magnificent copy of the first collected edition of the whole of Shakspeare's Plays. In the meantime the hon. secs. report that fine copies of the second and third folios are now procurable from Messrs. Sotheran and Co., for £65, which they recommend to be purchased by a special fund.

The donations of books have been numerous during the year, and a list thereof is appended to this report. Some idea may be formed of the interest felt in the Shakspeare Library by the presentation of five handsome volumes of a Polish translation of the plays, by M. Josef Poznanski, of Warsaw; by the gift of an excellent bust of Shakspeare, carved from a fragment of Herne's Oak, in Windsor Forest; and accompanied by a volume appropriately bound in oak from the same tree, presented by Mr. William Bragge, C.E., of Sheffield; and also by the presentation of a portrait of Shakspeare, which has just been received from Mr. Joseph Lilly, the eminent Shakspearean bookseller, of Garrick Street, London.

"Our Shakspeare Club," which took the first public steps for the formation of the Library, has made its annual presentation—a copy of a rare

and valuable work, "Harding's Illustrations of Shakspeare's Plays;" and the president of the club, Mr. George Dawson, although absent from England from ill-health, has presented a very scarce folio of engravings, "Mortimer's Illustrations to Shakspeare's Plays."

The Free Libraries Committee has spared no pains to keep the Shakspeare Library in perfect order, and to render its treasures as accessible to students as a regard for due and proper preservation will allow; but it must be remembered that many of the volumes are so rare that, if lost or damaged, they could not be replaced.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY, 1869-70.

English	688
French	59
German	386
Italian	36
Bohemian	25
Danish	13
Dutch.....	10
Frisian	2
Hungarian.....	11
Polish.....	5
Spanish	2
Swedish.....	18

1,255

of which number 110 volumes were presented, 27 were transferred from other departments, and 1,118 were purchased from the Shakspeare Subscribers' Fund.

At this meeting a special fund was commenced for the purchase of copies of the second and third folio editions of Shakspeare's plays.

During the year 1870, 1,214 volumes were added to the Shakspeare Library. Eighty-five volumes were presented; 227 removed from the general Reference Library (being lives of actors, and of the characters in Shakspeare's plays, Histories of the Stage, and of Early English Literature); and 902 volumes were purchased, from funds specially subscribed.

The library now (January, 1871) contains 3,463 volumes, classified as follows:—

	Volumes.
English Editions of Shakspeare's Works	893
" Selections	11
" Separate Plays and Poems.....	258
" Shaksperiana	990

French Editions of Shakspeare's Works	37
" Selections	13
" Separate Plays and Poems.....	36
" Shaksperiana	75
German Editions of Shakspeare's Works	327
" Selections	15
" Separate Plays and Poems.....	122
" Shaksperiana	490
Bohemian Editions of Shakspeare's Works	29
Danish Editions of Shakspeare's Works	24
" Selections	5
" Separate Plays and Poems.....	18
Dutch Selections	2
" Separate Plays and Poems.....	27
" Shaksperiana	5
Frisian Selection.....	1
" Separate Play	1
Greek (Modern), Separate Play	1
" " Shaksperiana	1
Hungarian Edition of Shakspeare's Works.....	12
Italian Edition of Shakspeare's Works.....	7
" Selections	18
" Separate Plays and Poems	8
" Shaksperiana	6
Polish Editions of Shakspeare's Works	5
Spanish Separate Play	1
" Shaksperiana	1
Swedish Edition of Shakspeare's Works	12
" Separate Plays and Poems.....	6
" Shaksperiana	4
Wallachian Separate Play.....	1
Welsh Separate Play	1
Total.....	<u>3,463</u>

THE FREE ART GALLERY.

In a town like Birmingham a Free Art Gallery may be made one of its most useful institutions. The great variety of trades in which design can be profitably introduced renders it desirable that every effort should be made to cultivate the taste of the workman, and to instruct him in the practice of drawing or designing. As early as 1754, a well-wisher of Birmingham addressed the following to the printer of the *Birmingham Gazette*, on the importance of the arts of drawing and designing to a manufacturing town like ours :—

That Arts and Commerce are the means of putting every Nation into a flourishing and respectable Condition, is now fully proved from the general practice of all Countries, and no People can be more sensible of it than the Inhabitants in and near this Place, who have felt the pleasing effects of it. This should put every country upon considering as well how to increase the Number of Manufactures, as also how to improve such Manufactures as have been the general Employment of any particular Time or Place for some Time past.

It's supposed the Iron Manufactory hath been a considerable Employment in this Town for three hundred years past and upwards, and I have often heard it observ'd that there are at this Time in it some as good working Hands for putting into execution any Plan or Design in the Iron Way, as are to be met with in any other Place ; but they are still wanting in the Art of Drawing and Designing. This is such an Impediment as calls out for a speedy Relief. It's a Reproach to the Manufacturers of this Place to have it declared and confess'd that if a Gentleman here wants to be supplied with a Pair of Gates and a few Palisadoes, for his own Use, that he must apply to Derby or Warwick to be furnished. If a Deficiency in the Art of Drawing and Designing is the great Obstruction to our making a more considerable Figure in the Iron, or any other Manufactory, than what we have hitherto done, why is not some Method fix'd upon for improving that Art amongst us ? The People in Birmingham don't want Generosity to encourage any useful Undertaking, when it is promoted upon any rational Principles ; and I dare venture to affirm, that if an Academy or School was to be set up

by Subscription for teaching some Young Persons, under proper Restrictions, in the Art of Drawing and Designing, and in some parts of Mathematical Learning, as have the Appearance of promoting any useful Manufactory, that proper Encouragement will be given to it suitable to the Undertaking. These are the Thoughts of

A. B., A well-wisher to Birmingham.

Birmingham, Jan. 19th, 1754.

It was a long time before such a wise suggestion received the attention which it deserved; and many years had to pass away before we had a School of Design, and many more before we had a Free Art Gallery. With the establishment of Free Libraries the provision of an Art Gallery was included; and a room for that purpose formed part of the plan for the Central Library Buildings.

At a meeting of the Town Council, held November 22, 1864, the Mayor read the following letter, offering a Picture by Mr. Coleman, as a donation to the Gallery of Art:

Birmingham, 21st November, 1864.

Dear Mr. Mayor,

We have the pleasure of informing you, and through you the Council of the Borough, that the liberality of a number of gentlemen has enabled us to secure for the town a fine Picture of Dead Game, by one of our most eminent local artists, the late Mr. Edward Coleman, for many years in the collection of R. G. Reeves, recently deceased.

The erection of a Gallery of Art, which the Council, with great wisdom and liberality, have sanctioned, seems to invite such contributions as that we have the honour of presenting; and considering that the occupations of many of the people of Birmingham have a direct connection with a knowledge of the fine arts, it is to be hoped that the Gallery may soon be enriched with a collection of pictures that will not only be a representation of the skill of local artists, but may be the means of educating the tastes of those upon whom the reputation of Birmingham manufactures chiefly depends.

Requesting that you will accept the Picture by Mr. Coleman as a donation to the Gallery of Art,

We are, dear Mr. Mayor,

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES R. COPE,

JOHN JAFFRAY,

PETER HOLLINS.

To the Mayor of Birmingham.

In a report of the Libraries Committee, presented to the Council on November 28th, 1865, they stated that an offer had been received from the Birmingham

Society of Arts, to deposit in the Art Gallery several valuable pictures belonging to the society, all but one being by celebrated artists of the English School, upon the following terms, viz.:—That, as the pictures cannot be alienated, they are to be lent to the Council; and all, or any one of them, to be returned at any time, if required by the Society of Arts. The Council to insure from fire. The two largest pictures, it is stated, require a little expense to be incurred in setting up and repairing the canvas, which, as the funds of the society are very low, it is hoped that the Council will not object to incur, the frames being all complete.

They also reported that they had received, through William Scholefield, Esq., M.P., from the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education, a list of six pictures belonging to the Science and Art Department, London, which are available for exhibition in the Art Gallery here, and will be forwarded as soon as the department shall have been informed when they will be required. The Council, on the committee's recommendation, conferred upon them authority to accept the foregoing and such other loans of pictures and works of art as may be offered to them for exhibition in the Gallery of Art, upon such terms and conditions as the committee in their discretion might deem fit.

The gallery was opened to the public on the 1st of August, 1867, and included Mr. F. H. Henshaw's fine picture, "An Old Oak Tree, Forest of Arden," presented by the Art Gallery Association; the seven pictures deposited by the Birmingham Society of Arts; Weigall's portrait of the Right Hon. C. B. Adderley, M.P., painted by order of the Town Council; F. W. Hulme's "An English Lane Scene," presented by Mr. J. Coppock; seven pictures, presented by Mr. E. Everitt; "Dead Game," by E. Coleman, presented by subscription; "Hortensia," by C. Le Brun,

presented by Mr. B. Johnson; Portrait of Joseph Sturge, presented by Mrs. Sturge; "Landscape," by Bond; and the Publications of the Arundel Society, by purchase. The following, deposited by the Birmingham and Midland Institute:—"The Bandit's Home," by J. V. Barber; "Morning," by J. V. Barber; "Gipsies, Herefordshire," by J. V. Barber; "Llyn Idwal," by S. Lines; "Burning of York Minster," by H. Harris; "The Poacher," by W. Underhill; Portrait of David Cox, by Sir J. W. Gordon; Portrait of A. Ryland, Esq., by Sir J. W. Gordon; Portrait of Samuel Lines, Esq., by W. T. Roden. There were also several pictures which were lent for exhibition by their respective owners.

In 1868, the loan of a very fine selection of armour, jewellery, and other art workmanship from South Kensington increased the attractions of the Art Gallery; and during their exhibition the number of visitors was very large. In their report for this year the committee desired to record their strong sense of the very handsome manner in which the loan from South Kensington was granted, the cost and care of transit, the providing of cases for the exhibition, and the arrangement of the articles, being all undertaken by the South Kensington authorities, and carried out most effectively by their officer, G. Wallis, Esq.

The committee also reported that the Albert Statue Committee, having no appropriate site for the out-door location of Mr. Foley's fine statue of the late Prince Consort, had deposited it in the Art Gallery, where for some months it had been the special attraction, and had been visited and admired by some thousands of persons, the labouring classes especially evincing great interest in it, crowding in at their dinner hour and other leisure time in large numbers. The bust of David Cox, by P. Hollins, Esq., the cost of which was defrayed by public subscription, and which had been

presented to the Corporation, had been transferred from the care of the Council of the Midland Institute to the Art Gallery. The bust of M. D. Hill, Esq., by Hollins, ordered by the Corporation, in commemoration of his services for many years as Recorder of the borough, had also been placed in the Art Gallery.

At the Town Council meeting, held February 11, 1868, the Free Libraries Committee submitted the following letter from the worshipful the Mayor, notifying his desire to present to the Art Gallery a marble bust of the late William Scholefield, Esq., M.P., an offer which the committee had gladly accepted:—

Borough of Birmingham,
Mayor's Office, January 1st, 1868.

My Dear Sir,

I have the honour of informing you that it is my wish to present to the Art Gallery a bust of the late Mr. William Scholefield, M.P., in commemoration of his eminent public services in the administration of the local affairs of the borough, and subsequently as one of its representatives, for a period of 20 years, in the Imperial Parliament.

I have communicated with Mr. Peter Hollins, and am assured by him that there is every probability that a life-like and correct resemblance can be obtained.

If your committee favour me by accepting this proposal, I will immediately take the necessary measures for carrying it into effect.

I have the honour to remain, my dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS AVERY, MAYOR.

Mr. Alderman Osborne,
Chairman of the Free Libraries Committee.

The committee had also received the following letter from Elijah Walton, Esq., offering to present to the Art Gallery three valuable pictures of scenes in the Dolomite Mountains:—

Westbourne Lodge, Staines, Middlesex,
January 14th, 1868.

Sir,

I shall be obliged if you will inform the Town Council that I desire to present to them, for the public Art Gallery, three large oil pictures, which I have lately painted, of views in the Dolomite Mountains, and which were exhibited in London last summer.

These paintings are the largest and most important works I have produced, and I wish to present them to my native town as an acknowledgment of the aid and encouragement I received from kind friends there in my youth, and of my obligations to the School of Art in New Street. If these paintings be the means of encouraging the young students to persevere in an art so truly elevating to the mind, I shall be glad indeed. I have mentioned to my friend Arthur Ryland, Esq., some suggestions as to the hanging of the paintings, and their transmittance, if the Council accept them, and which he will submit to the Committee having the care of the Art Gallery; and I would add that it would be well, if possible, to put glass before the pictures, in order to preserve them from the damaging influence of the dust and smoke unavoidable in a manufacturing town.

I subjoin the particulars of the pictures.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

ELIJAH WALTON.

T. Avery, Esq., Mayor of Birmingham.

No. 1.—"Monte Marmorolo," seen from Val d'Auronzo, Italy. Size, 9 feet by 6 feet.

No. 2.—"Monte Tofana," as seen from above Cortina d'Ampezza, Tyrol, Austria. Size, 6 feet by 4 feet.

No. 3.—"Monte Civita and Lago d'Alleghe," Italy. Size 9 feet by 6 feet.

To this the Mayor returned the following reply:—

January 17th, 1868,

Sir,

Mr. Alderman Ryland has forwarded to me your communication of the 14th instant, purposing to present three large and valuable oil pictures to the Public Art Gallery of this town. I have now the honour of acknowledging this noble and generous proposal, and will take the earliest opportunity of submitting your letter to the Town Council. In the meanwhile, I may express my conviction that the paintings will be accepted by the Town Council, and by the public at large, with sentiments of grateful appreciation.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS AVERY, Mayor.

Elijah Walton, Esq.

The Committee also appended a letter from C. R. Cope, Esq., offering to present to the Corporation one of the pictures lent by him for exhibition in the Gallery last year, and recommended that they be authorised to accept the foregoing offers, and to cause the pictures to be framed, and to take such measures for the preservation thereof as they may deem necessary.

Metchley House, Edgbaston,
January 28th, 1868.

Dear Sir,

I shall be glad to have the two large pictures I lent to the Art Gallery returned to me as soon as convenient.

The third picture, "Fish," by Moses Haughton, I wish to present to the town for the Art Gallery, as it is a good specimen of one of the best artists our town has produced, and particularly of those whom the art of japanning brought out.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

CHARLES R. COPE.

T. Standbridge, Esq.,
Town Clerk.

The report was approved, and the thanks of the Council voted to the donors of the pictures.

In September, 1868, R. L. Chance, Esq., presented to the Art Gallery a fine picture by H. J. Johnson, entitled "The Rock of Gibraltar;" and, in August, 1869, supplemented this handsome gift by presenting two valuable and interesting works, viz.: "The Edge Hills, from Burton Dasset," by C. T. Burt, and "Paddy Preparing his Ammunition," by A. Gunn.

Mr. P. Cormouls presented, in September, 1869, "The Old Gravel Pit," by W. W. Gill.

In July, 1869, the Committee, in reply to a joint application made by themselves and the Society of Arts, received a collection of Indian workmanship, on loan to the town, from the Secretary of State for India, from the Government Museum. This fine collection was exhibited in the Art Gallery, and from a descriptive guide, prepared by Mr. W. C. Aitken for the School of Art, we select the following information:—

The Corporation Free Art Gallery was opened to the public on the 1st of August, 1867. Since that time nearly *one third of a million* of visits have been paid to it, and, it is very gratifying to know, chiefly by artisans. To give accurate figures, the number of visits up to the 12th of February, 1870, amounted to 332,360, made up as follows:—

From August 1 to December 31, 1867	34,560
From January 1 to December 31, 1868	196,703
From January 1 to December 31, 1869	93,225
From January 1 to February 12, 1870	7,872

Total..... 332,360

The average attendance over the period (deducting Sundays, on which day the Gallery is not open) reaches 418 per day. The large excess of visits paid in 1868 is attributable to the introduction, in that year, of the Albert Statue, and a loan of very attractive objects from the South Kensington Museum, borrowed by the Committee of the Birmingham School of Art, and by permission of the Free Art Gallery Committee exhibited in the Gallery. This collection attracted crowds of artisan visitors.

In order to show how materially the attendance to the Gallery is increased by the introduction of new objects, eight months have been selected in which the Gallery was dependent only on its permanent attractions, *i. e.*, pictures, etc.; the attendance averaged only 143 visits per day.

The Albert Statue on its introduction, and for four months thereafter, raised the attendance to, per day.....	}	711—total number of visits.....
		74,596
The South Kensington Loan, 7½ months open, to, per day	}	774—total number of visits
		159,820
The East India Collection for three months, from November 11th, 1869, to February 12th, 1870 (still open), to, per day.....	}	324—total to February 12th
		20,404

If a proof may be given as to the increased interest felt by the public in the examination of objects of art and taste, we have the means of comparison—by contrasting the numbers who visited a loan collection from South Kensington, opened for *three* months in the Athenæum Rooms, Upper Temple Street, in the months of February, March, and April, 1855. During that period the total number of visits paid was only 12,711; but, as has been already stated, the Loan Collection in the Art Gallery, 1868–9, open 7½ months, shows a total of 159,820 visits paid, which distinctly proves a growing interest in such exhibitions, and the importance of maintaining such an institution as the Corporation Free Art Gallery of Birmingham. It also proves how the introduction of new objects, by gift and loan, increases and whets the desire to visit such places of amusement and instruction. To encourage the growth of taste, it is essential that those who are expected to produce the beautiful shall be surrounded by what is beautiful. Taste is retarded or advanced, it “grows by what it feeds upon.” Continental taste is the result of Free Art Galleries; and the abuse which has been heaped wholesale on the ornamental manufactures of Birmingham, may be traced to the absence (until recently) of any collection of objects calculated to increase and cultivate the æsthetic faculties of its artisan population. The absence of such means of education has been dearly paid for locally, and has cost more in the aggregate than the maintenance of a dozen Art Galleries.

Accepting the Free Art Gallery as one of the institutions of the town, a worthy pendant to the very successful Free Reference and Lending Libraries, and reading rooms, it becomes a matter of great importance that its contents should be added to, and its usefulness be thereby increased. The liberality of local possessors of works of art will no doubt, by their gifts and loans in the future, help its success. From public collections such

as the South Kensington Museum we have a right to claim loans. In time coming there is yet another source from which aid may be demanded. On good authority we are told that, "If the Government made a national collection of the superfluities known to be in existence, there might be many separate collections of works of art for distribution in the provinces." The Turner bequest forms one of the elements of the national collections; apart from his finished works there were included in his bequest the contents of seven cases, containing in all 19,000 sketches or studies. Mr. Ruskin selected "four hundred of the most characteristic, and had them framed, glazed, and cabinets constructed for them, *which would admit of their free use by the public.*" Where are these drawings? On the 19th of July, 1869, on the occasion of the vote for the Educational Supplies being put in the House, in answer to a question asked by Lord Henry Lennox respecting the distribution of the superfluities of the National Collections, a reply was given by a Lord of the Treasury, 'that two collections of Turner drawings had been chosen, and would be established in Dublin and Edinburgh.'" *The Provinces were passed over, and will be, until united action is taken by members of Parliament, and a Bund be formed by them to demand from the Lords of the Treasury the immediate selection of the superfluities from the national collections, the formation therefrom of one collection, its division, and the distribution of the parts to localities, in order to aid the public generally, and the art and special industries practised in each. In this way alone can strict justice be done as regards the proper distribution of works of art to provincial Free Art Galleries—that of Birmingham being specially included.*

But the Corporation Free Art Gallery has yet another claim to permanence. Viewed as a place of amusement, apart from the instruction to be derived, it has probably supplied the best public test as to the good behaviour of those who paid the 332,360 visits to it. Of all the visitors, it has been found necessary to expel only one. Not one single object gifted or lent has been injured; the utmost order and propriety has been observed, even when the gallery has been thronged, as at Christmas and Easter holidays. And it is satisfactory to know that the students, male and female, who have, by permission, made copies from one or two pictures in the gallery, have been allowed to continue their painting without interruption, or interference from being overlooked.

The catalogue which Mr. Aitken prepared gives some useful and interesting information concerning many of the pictures exhibited in the Art Gallery. The portrait of C. Jennens, Esq., of Gopsall, Leicestershire, lent by C. H. Bracebridge, Esq., is introduced in the following brief but excellent sketch, and the old worthy is thereby made to live again for the pleasure of the visitor to the gallery:—

The subject of this portrait was born in 1698, died 20th November, 1773, aged 75. He was a Nonconformist gentleman, who is said to have accumulated a fortune amounting to three millions of money. He was a gentleman of considerable literary taste, was the friend of Handel, and is said to have written the words for the oratorios the "Messiah" and "Belshazzar," composed by the great musician. He commenced an edition of Shakspeare's works in 1769, and published "King Lear," "Hamlet," "Othello," and "Julius Cæsar;" but becoming entangled in a discussion with Steevens and Johnson, the publication ceased. He lived in right royal magnificence, was a munificent patron of the arts; and it is said, when he resided in London, he drove to correct his proofs, from Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, to his printer's, in Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street, "in a four-horse carriage with four lackeys. On arriving at the Passage he descended from his coach, and was preceded by a servant, whose business it was to clear away oyster shells, and any other obstacle that might impede his passage." His connection with Birmingham may be traced to his renting Erdington Hall and the water mills in its vicinity, from the Holtes of Aston (the mills, or others since erected on their site, are now known as Rollason's Rolling Mills). Mr. Jennens was buried near Coleshill. Of his immense fortune (by his will, which is given by Nichols) he left the great portion to his sister's son, William Penn Assheton Curzon, and in default to the heirs of his godson, Charles Finch, second son of Heneage, Earl of Aylesford. His property eventually passed into the Howe family, by his nephew, William Penn Curzon. The last-named inherited the pictures, engravings, statues, library of books, plate, etc., at Gopsall. His music books and instruments were left to the Earl of Aylesford, to be considered as heirlooms of the family. It was commonly believed that Mr. Jennens died without heirs. This delusion was kept up for many years; even within the last two years letters have appeared in the Birmingham newspapers from would-be claimants of the Jennens estates and wealth. By his will munificent legacies were left to be devoted to charitable purposes.—*See Shæloher's Life of Handel, Biographical Dictionary, by Stephen Jones, Letter of C. H. Bracebridge, Esq., etc.*

Of Henry Wyatt, the painter of "Juliet," presented by the Birmingham School of Art and Design, we learn that "on the death of his parents, Wyatt resided at Handsworth, with his guardian, son-in-law of Egginton, celebrated as a glass painter. This evidently determined the choice of his profession as an artist; he went to London in 1811; studied at the Royal Academy, and in the studio of Sir Thomas Lawrence, from 1817 to 1819; painted portraits in Birmingham; died in Manchester, February 27, 1840." Moses Haughton, painter of the group of Fish, presented by C. R. Cope, Esq., was in "early life engaged in the decoration of

japanned and papier mâché wares, and worked for Mr. Clay, whose manufactory was in New Hall Street, and who held the appointment of japanner in ordinary to George III. He was one of the successful manufacturers of this town who filled the office of High Sheriff of Warwickshire. Haughton eventually essayed art, and became celebrated for his examples of 'still life.' A tablet is erected to his memory under the organ gallery in St. Philip's Church, Birmingham."

The notice of the picture (Landscape), "Morning," by J. V. Barber, another local artist, furnishes us with the following facts of his life:—

Principally engaged as a teacher of drawing, the late T. Creswick, F. H. Henshaw, J. J. Hill, and other artists who have achieved excellence, studied under him. His powers as an artist are well represented by the examples in the gallery. He was one of the local artists who formed the present Royal Birmingham Society of Artists. After retiring from teaching drawing, in 1837, he visited Italy frequently. In his last visit there, while sketching in the vicinity of Rome, he exposed himself to the influence of the "malaria" of the Pontine Marshes, caught fever, and died, without one friend to cheer him, at Rome, September 11, 1838; Mrs. Barber, on his last visit, being unable through illness to accompany him. His pictures bear evidence "that the end he aimed at, viz., not to create scenes altogether, or to adhere slavishly to the delineation of all parts of those which Nature presents to us," was carried out in his finished works. J. V. Barber was the son of an artist, Joseph Barber, who died 16th January, 1811, and to whose memory a tablet is erected near the entrance door of St. Paul's Church. Of his greater son—whose remains, brought from Rome, were interred in the interior of the same Church—there is no visible record. Contemporary local artists admit that he was the best artist and most successful local teacher of art which Birmingham had up to that period produced. His only monument exists in his works. Should this be?

Our readers will, doubtless, repeat Mr. Aitken's question, "Should this be?"

The group, consisting of dog, dead peacock, swan, fawn, heron, hare, and pheasant, which was presented by subscription, was painted by the late Edward Coleman, also a Birmingham artist.

Mr. Coleman is remembered for the fidelity of his portraits. He also painted dead game, etc., with success and ability. The above is an excellent example of his skill in the last-named department of Art. He was the son of a Birmingham artist of no great repute, was born in a house, the site of which is now occupied by the Clarendon Hotel (corner of Upper Temple Street), and died in a house in the Crescent, Birmingham, a few years ago.

Of Daniel Bond, of this town, who is represented by a landscape, purchased by the Free Libraries Committee, we have the following information :—

Bond was in early life engaged as a painter of japanned and papier mâché ware, chiefly "tea boards," or trays. He was apprenticed to Mr. Clay, of Birmingham, the original inventor of papier mâché in England. In connection with his trade as a decorator, Bond studied art, became an artist, and painted landscapes similar in style to the above-named example, which bears the impress of those executed at the period when he painted—*i.e.*, when artists studied their effects at home, not from nature. He studied at the Royal Academy of London in 1764, and exhibited a picture of "The Angels appearing to the Shepherds," at the Royal Academy, which was severely criticised by the London press. This picture is now in the possession of Mrs. Rhodes, Wavehill, Handsworth, near Birmingham. He was prosperous in the world, and resided in a house still standing in the Hagley Road. He died in Birmingham, 1804. In 1764 Bond gained a prize of 25 guineas from the London Society of Arts for the second best landscape, and the next year 50 guineas for the first.

"Llyn Idwal, North Wales," is the work of Mr. Samuel Lines, born at Allesley, February 7, 1778, and died in Birmingham, November, 22, 1863. "Mr. Lines," Mr. Aitken writes, "will be long remembered as a successful teacher of drawing and as a local artist; many of the manufacturers in this town were his pupils, and received their lessons in drawing at his Academy of Arts, Temple Row West. His memory is cherished by all who knew him. His remains are interred in St. Philip's Churchyard, opposite the house in which he spent his long and useful life."

Mrs. Sturge presented the portrait of the late Joseph Sturge, painted by Mr. J. Barrett, and of this noble-hearted man we have this brief sketch :—

Joseph Sturge, known as a distinguished practical philanthropist, was born at Elberton, Gloucestershire, August 2, 1793. Commenced business as corn merchant at Bewdley, afterwards at Birmingham, where he permanently resided. He was an energetic advocate for the abolition of slavery and the corn laws. As a member of the Peace Society, he visited France in 1848, to urge on the Provisional Government (after the flight of Louis Philippe) the preservation of peace, and the freedom of slaves in its colonies. He visited Russia in 1854, and presented to the Emperor Nicholas a remonstrance against the prosecution of the war in the Crimea. He died, honoured and respected, 14th May, 1859.

The Art Gallery also contains the marble bust of the late David Cox, Esq., artist; subscribed for and presented by the Cox Memorial Committee. By Peter Hollins, sculptor, V.P.R.B.S.A. Of this glorious poet-painter, Mr. Aitken says—

David Cox was born at Birmingham, April 29, 1783; died June 7, 1859. His remains lie interred in the churchyard of Harborne. He was celebrated as an artist in oil and water colour, chiefly the latter, in which he was a master. His works are distinguished for their fidelity, freedom of execution, breadth of effect, and local truth of colour. They are essentially English, and are universally appreciated by all who recognise a department of art in which England has no equal. He was the son of a white-smith, who lived in Hill Street, and in early life was engaged as scene painter in the theatres of Birmingham and London. He studied art under a miniature painter named Feilder, thereafter under John Varley, one of the early water-colour artists of the English School.

The marble bust of Mr. William Scholefield was presented by Thos. Avery, Esq., and also comes from the studio of Mr. Peter Hollins. Mr. Scholefield, as we trust all our readers will remember, was for twenty years one of the Members of Parliament for the borough of Birmingham, and was eminently distinguished for his kindness, courtesy, and attention to the interests of his constituents, whose views he firmly advocated and consistently maintained.

Another local artist, the painter of many delightful pictures, is Mr. C. T. Burt, whose "Edge Hills, from Burton Dasset," was presented by R. L. Chance, Esq. "In addition to the intrinsic value of this picture as a work of art, it is interesting as representing a landscape, including the field on which the battle of Edgehill was fought, on Sunday, the 23rd of October, 1642. This battle was the commencement of the Civil War in England, which may be said only to have ended with the death of Charles I. on the scaffold, January 30th, 1649."

We have previously mentioned the three pictures presented by their painter, Mr. Elijah Walton. The artist was "born in Birmingham, November 22nd, 1832; received his early

lessons in art at the Birmingham School of Design; completed his studies in London; is celebrated for his pictures of Alpine and Egyptian scenery; has produced, from drawings and paintings made by himself, illustrated works on 'The Camel: its Anatomy, Proportions, and Paces,' 1865; 'Peaks and Valleys of the Alps,' 1857; 'Clouds, their Forms and Combinations,' 1869; 'Flowers from the Upper Alps,' 1869."

Mr. Henry Harris is represented by "The Burning of York Minster," presented by W. J. Beale, Esq. Of this painter we are told:—

The artist was the son of Mr. Harris, a manufacturer of this town, a gentleman of educated tastes, who resided in Colmore Row. He was born in Birmingham, 1805, and died in 1865. Studied art under an artist named Rider, of Leamington. His early works attracted the attention of the Duchess of St. Albans. By a rich bachelor, of the name of Wilton, he was induced to visit and study in London, and exhibited at the Royal Academy, where his works were well hung and favourably criticised. An admirer of Gainsborough, Collins, Constable, and Cox, his works breathe the spirit of poetry and beauty of quiet English landscapes, lit up by the early rays of the rising, or the last gleams of the setting sun. That Mr. Harris would have made a success in dealing with another class of subjects, "The Burning of York Minster" is a proof. Mr. Harris was secretary of the Birmingham Society of Artists from 1852 to 1859, and was one of the then Birmingham artists who originated the present Society. The fire was the work of an incendiary, named Jonathan Martin, brother of the celebrated artist, John Martin, who painted "Belshazzar's Feast," etc. The fire occurred February 2nd, 1829, and the damage sustained was estimated at £60,000.

We have selected from this admirably prepared catalogue those parts which refer to local men and local events. An exceedingly useful paper on the Indian Collection from the same skilful pen, was added to the catalogue, which may be read with much profit and instruction, and fully proves the important uses of which the Art Gallery is capable.

The year 1870 was one "of unexampled progress;" and its history is thus recorded in the report of the Committee:—"An application to the Trustees of the National Gallery resulted in the loan of a most valuable and interesting col-

lection of drawings and sketches by the late J. M. W. Turner, the greatest master of English landscape. The Council of the Midland Institute at the same time added to the obligations they had previously conferred upon the Committee, by placing in the Art Gallery their fine collection of drawings illustrative of Warwickshire, comprising admirable studies by David Cox, De Wint, Westall, Baxter, and other eminent artists, which they specially had re-framed for the purpose. By the exertions of the Curator, Mr. William Hall (to whom the Committee are specially indebted), many pictures of merit were borrowed for exhibition; and the gallery having been thoroughly cleansed and re-decorated, the collection was opened to public view immediately before the Musical Festival, when it attracted an unusually large number of visitors; and since that time, by additions to the contents of the gallery, the public interest has been fully maintained, and the value of the collection increased and demonstrated as a means not only of recreation but of art education."

The great feature of 1870 had a direct bearing upon this latter purpose of the gallery, a most successful effort having been made to lay the foundation of a museum of industrial art.

In June, on the recommendation of the Art Gallery Subcommittee, a meeting of gentlemen interested in art education was called for the purpose of raising funds for the erection of an art museum. Negotiations had previously been opened with Mr. Henry Cole, C.B., on behalf of the Department of Science and Art, and with Dr. Forbes Watson, F.R.S., on behalf of the India Museum; and in both cases unusually favourable terms were obtained for the purchase of specimens from South Kensington and from the India collection; the Science and Art Department, on the

recommendation of Mr. Cole, consented to bear seventy-five per cent. of the cost of purchases from South Kensington; and the India department, through the good offices of Dr. Forbes Watson, entered, in all respects, most warmly into the views of the committee.

The meeting above referred to was held on the 14th of June, when a committee was appointed to collect funds to be expended in purchases for the Art Gallery. The efforts of this committee, aided by the Free Libraries Committee, resulted in a subscription of upwards of £1,100. Of this amount, £100 was contributed by the Free Libraries Committee, for the purchase of specimens from the South Kensington Museum; £100 by Mr. Jaffray, for a collection of Indian metal work, etc.; £100 by Mr. W. Middlemore, for Indian textile fabrics; and £100 each from Messrs. Elkington and Co., Messrs. Nettlefold and Chamberlain, Messrs. F. and C. Osler, and Mr. Archibald Kenrick; and £50 each from the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Mr. G. Dixon, M.P., and Messrs. R. W. Winfield and Co. The other subscribers to this fund were—£25 each from Mr. Alderman T. Avery, Mr. T. Lloyd, and Mr. W. H. Avery; £20 from Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliff; £10. 10s. each from Messrs. Evans and Askin, Mr. J. T. Collins, Mr. Alderman Phillips, and Mr. Councillor Heaton; £10 each from Messrs. W. Tonks and Son, Mr. T. Kenrick, Mr. A. Field, Mr. C. R. Cope, Mr. J. S. Wright, and Mr. Councillor Baker; £5. 5s. each from Mr. Councillor Hinks and Mr. J. W. M'Cardie; £5 each from Messrs. J. Graham and Son, Mr. Councillor J. B. Stone, Mr. Alderman A. Ryland, Mr. George Jabet, Mr. R. F. Martineau, Mr. John Bragg, Mr. J. P. Turner, Messrs. Hopkins and Son, Mr. George Shaw, Mr. C. T. Parsons, Mr. W. Martin, and Messrs. Marris and Norton; £3. 3s. each from Mr. Alderman Manton and Mr. Alderman Yates; £2. 2s. each from Mr. Joseph Hatton, Mr.

J. A. Langford, LL.D., Mr. Thos. Prime (Mayor), Mr. Alderman E. C. Osborne, Mr. J. Thackray Bunce, Mr. Councillor Harris, Mr. Councillor Jesse Collings, Messrs. C. Payton and Son, Mr. Councillor Deykin, Mr. Councillor Perks, Mr. Councillor Rolason, Messrs. W. and J. Randel, Messrs. James Hinks and Sons, Mr. C. J. Philip, and Messrs. Watts and Manton; £1. 1s. each from Mr. B. Harris, Rev. C. Evans, M.A., Mr. Councillor Brooke Smith, Mr. S. Timmins, Mr. W. C. Aitken, Mr. W. Pearce and Mr. J. Hill.

On behalf of the Corporation, the Chairman of the Free Libraries Committee (Councillor W. Harris), and the Chairman of the Art Gallery Sub-Committee (Mr. J. Thackray Bunce), were appointed to direct the expenditure of the fund in the purchase of specimens, and the co-operation of two gentlemen to be appointed by the subscribers was requested by the Committee. In compliance with this request, Mr. J. H. Chamberlain and Mr. W. C. Aitken were nominated by the subscribers. The Committee of Selection have already expended a considerable portion of the fund in the purchase of examples of works of art from the South Kensington Museum; and of Indian carving, metal work, and jewellery, from the India Museum and other sources. In respect of these purchases, they acknowledged with sincere thanks, the courtesy and liberality of Mr. Henry Cole, C.B., and Dr. Forbes Watson, F.R.S., who showed the greatest anxiety to further the work undertaken by the Committee. The Committee of Selection also purchased a collection of ancient and modern Venetian glass from Messrs. Salviati; and a collection of English glass, the productions of Messrs. Barnes, artisan glass-workers, of Birmingham. Many of these specimens are now arranged in the gallery, and others are in preparation for arrangement. The remainder of the fund is reserved for the purchase of examples from the

International Exhibition of 1871, the provision of the necessary fittings for the exhibition of the works obtained for the gallery, etc.

In connection with the Art Gallery, the Committee recorded their deep sense of obligation to the Board of the General Hospital, to Mr. W. Sharp, Mr. Gillott, and other collectors, for loans of valuable pictures, and to Mr. Frederick Elkington for the loan of a most important collection of Japanese and Chinese enamels, of an extent and quality unsurpassed by any collection in the kingdom. The best reward of the donors and contributors, both of money and works of art, will be found in the appreciation manifested by the public.

The Art Gallery never was so valuable as it is now, or, the Committee believe, so useful in the cultivation of art knowledge, or in the influence it is calculated to exert upon the designers and workmen engaged in the manufactures of the town.

The following is the return of the number of persons visiting the Art Gallery in 1870:—

No. of Days open.	Month.	No. of Visitors.	Daily Average.
26	Jan.	6,518	about 251
24	Feb.	4,306	" 180
24	March	11,667	Models for Mason Statue { exhibited {
25	April	15,934	
26	May	7,094	" 273
25	June	5,643	" 226
13	July	2,034	" 156
2	Aug.	5,839	Musical Festival and { the Fair {
26	Sept.	15,726	
26	Oct.	6,458	" 248
26	Nov.	5,775	" 222
6	Dec.	4,112	" 685
249		91,106	366

The present Committee of the Free Libraries, under whose management the Free Art Gallery is also placed, are:—

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

Mr. G. B. Lloyd, Mayor.
Mr. Councillor W. Harris, Chairman.
Mr. Alderman E. C. Osborne.
Mr. Alderman E. Yates,
Mr. Councillor Jesse Collings,
Mr. Councillor J. Hinks,
Mr. Councillor W. Perks,
Mr. Councillor J. B. Stone, F.G.S.
Mr. Councillor J. M. Coppock,
Mr. Councillor T. Griffiths,
Mr. Councillor R. C. Barrow.

NON-MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

Rev. C. Clarke, F.L.S.
Mr. John Bragg.
Mr. Thackray Bunce, F.S.S.
Mr. G. J. Johnson, F.R.S.L.
Mr. J. A. Langford, LL.D.
Mr. S. Timmins, F.R.S.L.

We cannot conclude this series of papers on the history of the Free Libraries without calling special attention to the invaluable services rendered by Mr. S. Timmins. He has been on the Committee from its first appointment to the present time, and to his unceasing attention to the interests of the Library, and to his extensive knowledge of books, the excellence and completeness of the selection is in a great measure due. His own donations of books have also been extensive and valuable, and it is especially gratifying to the writer to be able to inform the readers of these papers, and those who use the Libraries, of their obligation to one of the most ardent lovers of books. Nor, we are assured, will any of his colleagues consider as invidious this brief reference to one who has laboured so nobly and so well.



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